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THE CRISIS OF COURTESY

Studies in the Conduct-Book in Britain, 1600-1900

EDITED BY

JACQUES CARRÉ



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JACQUES CARRÉ

INTRODUCTION

In the past fifty years, social historians have gradually rediscovered the literature of conduct, which earlier in our century had often been dismissed as one of the more marginal by-products of the Renaissance and classical ages. In the wake of Norbert Elias' pioneering work on the role of manners in what he called the 'process of civilization' ¹ they have shown how class structure and identity were partly defined thanks to codes of conduct. ² More recently gender studies have begun to assess the social and cultural effects of prescribed patterns of femininity and masculinity. ³ Literary historians are also becoming increasingly interested in the interrelation between fashionable social types in a given age and the characters of contemporary fiction or theatre. ⁴ Yet, although conduct literature is now more and more often referred to by scholars in various branches of research, it remains too rarely studied for its own sake, especially in a diachronic perspective. ⁵ This is what the present volume seeks to do as far as English conduct-books are concerned, with chapters ranging from the late 16th to the early 20th century. As this introduction purports to show, it concentrates on the transformation of conduct literature rather than on its heyday in the Renaissance.

The twentieth century reader might perhaps be tempted to mistake conduct-literature for a series of manuals of etiquette. This is was in fact the approach of Evelyn Waugh when he remarked in 1956 that "if you examine the accumulated code of precepts which define the gentleman you will find

¹ N. Elias. *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation, Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. (Frankfurt/Main, 1976).

² See for example L. Stone. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*. (Oxford, 1965).

³ Cf. N. Armstrong & L. Tennenhouse, eds. *The Ideology of Conduct : Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*. (New York, 1987) ; J. V. Jones, ed. *Women in the Eighteenth Century : Constructions of Femininity*. (London, 1990).

⁴ See for example A. Montandon, ed. *L'honnête homme et le dandy*. (Tübingen, 1992).

⁵ The very few general surveys of British conduct-books are mostly descriptive and rather outdated : cf. J. E. Mason. *Gentlefolk in the Making*. (Philadelphia, 1935) ; J. Wildeblood. *The Polite World, a Guide to English Manners and Deportment from the Thirteenth to the Nineteenth Century*. (Oxford, 1965). The international research team on conduct-literature, created by Professor Alain Montandon at the Université Blaise Pascal, Clermont-Ferrand (France), is now engaged in a diachronic and comparative study of European conduct-books ; cf. A. Montandon, ed. *Savoir Vivre I* (Lyon, 1990) ; A. Montandon, ed. *Étiquette & politesse*. (Clermont-Ferrand, 1992).

that almost all are negative."⁶ In the Renaissance, however, courtesy-books (as they were then called) were not narrowly prescriptive; they essentially aimed at creating harmony between the outward behaviour of men and women and the fundamental moral and social values of the time. Ideally, the Elizabethan notion of courtesy fused beauty with goodness.⁷ Yet this spiritual significance of courtesy was to be lost much sooner than is commonly realized. The fatal decline of the British courtesy-book, a genre so brilliantly illustrated in the 16th century, should not in fact be traced to the Victorian and Edwardian age and its obsession with social solecisms (apparent in such titles as *Don't or Blunders in Behaviour Corrected* ...) The crisis of courtesy and its attendant decline into mere conduct, which the present volume explores, was in fact older, and may be described as a lengthy and gradual process extending through the 17th and 18th centuries. What is more, it did not simply lead to the narrowing down of a genre into repetitive, uninspired, although (for modern readers) occasionally hilarious manuals of etiquette; but rather it involved the dissemination of its subject-matter into a broad range of literary genres, such as, preeminently, the novel. The decline of the courtesy-book in fact meant the rebirth of the literature of conduct in other, often much more sophisticated, forms, even as early as Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, as Michael Steppat demonstrates. The great age of the metamorphosis of conduct-literature in England, however, was clearly the Augustan age (approximately 1660-1750), and it is no coincidence that most of the chapters of this book are devoted to it.

To understand the reasons of this crucial change in the form and contents of such literature, it is perhaps useful to remind the reader of the nature and aims of the earliest courtesy-books published in England. One should remember that many of these were translations or adaptations of continental works. It is clear that in the 16th century the British nobility turned to the Continent, and to Italy in particular, to find patterns of refined conduct, both for men and women. The three great classics of Italian conduct literature, written by Castiglione, Della Casa and Guazzo, were all translated into English in that century. However, as John Woodhouse reminds us, the numerous English versions and adaptations of these treatises tended to play down their more philosophical and recondite aspects, and to enhance their practical advice on behaviour.

When one turns to the purely British conduct-books, one finds in them a distinctly pragmatic, even utilitarian strain. They are very largely about what one might call the grace of authority, both within the family, within

⁶ Nancy Mitford ed. *Noblesse Oblige*. (London, 1956) 74.

⁷ Cf. F. Whigham. *Ambition and Privilege : the Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy*. (Berkeley, 1984).

the Court, within society at large. Those in superior positions (by virtue of their class or their sex) are taught how to obtain ready obedience without brutality, while those in inferior positions are taught to do their duty without demurring. The first major English conduct-book, *The Boke Named the Governour* (1531), by Sir Thomas Elyot, does not try to disguise its down-to-earth purpose, which was to train the future élites of the country in an efficient manner:

Now all ye readers that desire to have your children to be governors, or in any other authority in the public weal of your country, if ye bring them up and instruct them in such form as in this book is declared, they shall then seem to all men worthy to be in authority, honour and noblesse, and all that is under their governance shall prosper and come to perfection.⁸

Here Elyot clearly indicated the original social, even political, function of conduct-literature in Renaissance Britain, which was to nurture leaders and administrators who should both be and look competent and respectable in the eyes the lower orders. Ideally, of course, the perfect gentleman's outward behaviour only mirrored the qualities of his soul. But there was a danger that he might ape the required behaviour without possessing the spiritual qualities. And it was of course this possibility which eventually ruined the whole concept of Renaissance courtesy. Tudor and Stuart conduct-books were perhaps read more often by aspiring gentry and unashamed upstarts than by self-assured aristocratic young men who had in any case learned the social graces almost from the cradle. And what the former kind of reader looked for was indeed rules of deportment, not chastisement of the soul... The courtier of course remained for a time the pattern of polite behaviour, hence the appeal of French conduct-books for the 17th century Englishman. But after the first English Revolution, this courtly model was almost fatally discredited in Britain. The emerging culture of the new, more diverse élites, which was an increasingly urban, consumerist culture, was now undermining the Renaissance ideal of the gentleman.

Of course, in the Augustan age, conduct literature was still about authority. The very relationship established between author and potential reader was still one of deference: the discourse on conduct, after all, was produced by a mature and/or experienced person addressing a young and/or inexperienced reader. And yet, after the Restoration, this discourse was less often legitimated by social superiority than by parental responsibility, professional experience or positions of trust. The often modest status of the writers on conduct as fathers, mothers, tutors, clergymen, or simply persons of experience, offered them sufficient justification for giving advice, without recourse to social eminence. Even if some of the better-known texts on

⁸ Thomas Elyot. *The Boke Named the Governour* [1531]. (London, 1907) 297.

conduct of that age, such as Lord Halifax's *The Ladies New Year Gift; or, Advice to a Daughter, as to Religion, Husband, House, Family and Children* (1688) or Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* (1774) were actually written by aristocrats (though not originally intended for publication), one may note how their authors nevertheless insist on their fatherly care for the welfare of their children rather than on their authority as grantees.

A second explanation of the changing nature of courtesy literature in modern England is the emergence of new social ideals. In the 17th and 18th centuries the aristocratic norms of behaviour were regularly criticized, and sometimes brutally challenged, as during the Puritan Commonwealth—and not just by the more rigorist members of British society. The rise of the 'moneyed interest' after the Revolution of 1688 and its increasing ascendancy in the early Hanoverian age provoked serious disruptions in the structure and values of the élite: while the *nouveaux riches* tried to obtain social recognition, the aristocratic manners and ways of life themselves came under attack, as the brilliant satirical literature of the early 18th century testifies. Such tensions in the upper strata of British society were bound to be reflected in courtesy literature, which formerly had a creative rather than critical approach to manners, and now gradually seemed to become obsolete. After a final spate of translations of French books on *savoir-vivre* in the early 18th century (apparent in the bibliography appended to this volume) the appeal of courtly manners suddenly ceased; such manners tended to become outmoded by mid-eighteenth century, and the final flowering of continental-style courtesy, Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* must have appeared ill-adapted to modern society, at least to middle-class people. The art of dissimulation, in particular, which had been a fundamental feature of the courtier, as John R. Woodhouse notes in his chapter, now seemed distasteful, if not positively immoral. Conversation was now seen as the art of being 'natural.' This is in evidence in the two chapters of the present volume which analyse Swift's and Fielding's respective essays on conversation. These authors both criticize the handbooks teaching genteel socializing in a mechanical way, and they advocate, among other things, a more natural and sincere kind of behaviour, in direct contrast with the affected or hypocritical manners often associated by satirists with the world of fashion, and indeed still recommended by Lord Chesterfield.

If aristocratic values were thus gradually losing ground, it was largely due to the energy of the urban middle-classes whose economic as well as moral influence made itself increasingly felt in the Augustan cities, and not just in the capital. ⁹ Merchants, lawyers, physicians, teachers, writers and artists,

⁹ See Peter Borsay. *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770*. (Oxford, 1989), especially chapters 8 to 11.

among others, began to realize that they formed the backbone of urban society, and also, sometimes, the intellectual élite of the country. Indeed, most of the authors of Augustan conduct literature may be found in their ranks: let us mention for example merchants like John Bernard and Jonas Hanway, a magistrate like Sir John Fielding, a physician like John Gregory, an apothecary like James Nelson, a writer like Daniel Defoe. Unsurprisingly, they tended to reject the genre of the classic courtesy-book, and to diversify their modes of expression on the subject. There is no Augustan equivalent to, say, Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman*. On the other hand, conduct literature was now to be found in such diverse forms as letters, essays, fiction, poetry and even periodicals. In addition, one found more practical guides addressed to a variety of social groups or occupations having in common a desire to refine their manners with a view to social ascension.

The range of readers became wider, as literacy grew in the cities, and far exceeded the boundaries of the aspiring middle-classes: if there were fewer and fewer books destined to the nobility, there were now more and more manuals addressed to the lower classes. Servants and apprentices were particularly well-served in that respect. The latter were even offered by William Hogarth in *Industry and Idleness* a series of ostensibly edifying prints, whose ambiguous messages Peter Wagner deciphers in the following pages. The middle-classes, however, had pride of place in the new media of conduct. They were inevitably tempted to redefine manners in a way that would confirm their own hold on urban society. The philosophy of social relationships which underpinned their writings on conduct was largely a plea for consensus and tolerance. In the increasingly mixed society of Augustan cities, people of different backgrounds jostled each other in coffee-houses, clubs, shops, play-houses and assembly-rooms. A need for some sort of norm of urban (and urbane) behaviour was therefore felt, and it was the new conduct-literature which catered for it. This new urbanity allowed people to live in at least superficial harmony not only with their kin but also with people from other social classes. There was a distinctly consensual strain about it, in so far as the authors' aim was ultimately to ensure a smooth running of daily life; at the same time, there was a serious preoccupation with moralizing public life. Thus, in his *Essay on Conversation* of 1743, Fielding defines successful social intercourse as the art of mutually pleasing and serving one another, not the art of impressing others by behaviour or dress:

Good-breeding [was] a word, I apprehend, not at first confined to externals, much less to any particular dress or attitude of the body; nor were the qualifications expressed by it to be furnished by a milliner, a tailor, or a periwig-maker; no, nor even by a dancing-master himself. [...] In short, by

good-breeding (notwithstanding the corrupt use of the word in a very different sense), I mean the art of pleasing, or contributing as much as possible to the ease and happiness of those with whom you converse.¹⁰

What is important in this redefinition of good breeding is not so much its definite hostility to the aristocratic (or would-be aristocratic) man of fashion as its ambition to foster the moralization of social intercourse.

The new conduct-literature was also increasingly practical in outlook. As I suggested earlier, some of it consisted in guides addressed to specific categories of people, such as the merchant, the traveller, the student, the tutor, the housekeeper, the apprentice, the spinster, the servant, etc. There was more and more emphasis on the efficiency of conduct, an almost utilitarian obsession with success—notably in Defoe's *The Complete Tradesman*. A new interest in fostering useful talents was apparent, not least in books on the education of daughters, in which the cultivation of the 'ornamental' accomplishments were regularly criticized. A new outlook on education in general was perceptible, notably with criticism of the traditional concentration on the classics, and insistence on the knowledge of modern languages. Virtues distinctly foreign to the aristocratic world such as the proper management of time and the dedication to hard work were now regularly emphasized, even in books destined to the upper classes. In fact, many of the basic principles of Protestant ethics now found expression in conduct-literature, although from a lay perspective.

In addition to this typically bourgeois preoccupation with efficiency, there was also, perhaps inevitably, a concern for defining new factors of distinction. Since the aristocratic model of behaviour now appeared rather obsolete, if not positively obnoxious to the new urban bourgeoisie, there was a need for proposing new ideals of behaviour which would allow the new élites to be recognized as such by the rest of society. Conduct literature, as always, was expected to play its part in helping the ambitious to rise in social standing—and this is of course why it survived so long. The cultivation of taste, as R. G. Saisselin explains in his chapter, was one of the stepping-stones to social ascension in Augustan Britain—although a very slippery one. In spite of Jonathan Richardson's efforts to demonstrate the 'Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure and Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur,'¹¹ the man of taste was quickly suspected of being merely a snob imitating aristocratic collectors. Nevertheless, it can be argued, as Michel Baridon suggests in his chapter on the 'gentleman-gardener,' that intellectual and moral modernity best found their expression through artistic

¹⁰ Henry Fielding, 'Essay on Conversation' [1743] in *The Works of Henry Fielding Esq.* (London, 1882) VI 297.

¹¹ Jonathan Richardson, *A Discourse on the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure and Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur*. (London, 1719).

practice.

On the other hand, it was also through women that bourgeois forms of distinction could be achieved. The civilizing role of women was gradually emphasized from the beginning of the 18th century, although it had been referred to much earlier, notably in Castiglione's *The Courtier*. One of course traditionally expected of women decency in language (if they spoke at all in public...), modesty of behaviour and elegance in manner; now these virtues were extolled as general patterns of behaviour for men as well as women, at least in the more urbane assemblies. It was even suggested to men that they could acquire refinement from the observation and imitation of well-bred women. James Forrester wrote for example in 1734:

It is the conversation of women that gives a proper bias to our inclinations, and, by abating the ferocity of our passions, engages us to that gentleness of deportment, which we style humanity.¹²

This idea was later often developed in essays, novels and periodicals, first in a somewhat sentimental fashion, later (especially in the 1780s) on a more elevated plane, when the Evangelical writers began to expound the notion of the middle-class woman as Christian apostle. Two chapters of this volume deal with the Victorian developments of this new image of woman, first as a missionary among the poor, secondly as the ideal spouse—"a humanizing and sanctifying power in the home," in Maurice Montabrut's words.

Thus, during the period between the Restoration and the early Victorian age, the nature and function of conduct-literature were drastically altered. The combined efforts of satirists of genius like Swift, Pope and Fielding, on the one hand, and of the often obscure authors of conduct literature published in various media, had managed to weaken the prestige of the continental-style courtier as well as of the British-style man of fashion. In the new, earnest, almost pre-Victorian atmosphere of the 1780s, the rich and the successful were required to be morally worthy of their social status, in short to be what they appeared. Thus was reversed the old ambition of courtesy literature, which was to adapt one's deportment to one's social status. The ambitious moral demands of the Evangelicals, however, were very hard to satisfy, and the ordinary Victorians were often content with playing the old game of affectation, thus encouraging the final decline of courtesy into etiquette. The fate endured by Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* is probably typical of this evolution: almost as soon as they were published, they were summarized, paraphrased, versified, even digested alphabetically into 'rules.' In short their spirit was lost, and only a mechanical application of some isolated recommendations, supposed to procure immediate gentility, was

¹² James Forrester. *The Polite Philosopher*. (Edinburgh, 1734) 51.

proposed to the unsuspecting reader. The present book, then, should thus help us realize that the Augustan age was a crucial age in the decline of conduct-books into etiquette, under the pressure of new élites and new social values. But it should also perhaps invite us to discover that the demise of courtly values did not mean a loss of interest in the substance of courtesy, but essentially a dissemination of its treatment in the whole spectrum of literature. As for the surviving form of conduct, etiquette, although it is admittedly a minor aspect of social observance, it can nevertheless be a rewarding field of study, as K. Dejardin wittily shows in the concluding chapter of this volume. It is perhaps in the most minute details of life as well as in the noblest pursuits of the mind that men and women reveal their true identities.

PART ONE

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A GENRE

JOHN R. WOODHOUSE

THE TRADITION OF DELLA CASA'S
GALATEO IN ENGLISH

In the most recent study of the *Galateo*, Alain Pons has demonstrated well the communicative ambition and skills of Giovanni Della Casa.¹ Quite correctly, too, he assigns to the *Galateo* its fundamental importance as a prototype for manuals of *savoir-vivre* in Europe. I wish to examine the fortune of the treatise in its English tradition, and I shall concentrate on the ways in which, for various strata of society, the didactic message was communicated. Northern, barbarian, Europe drank up like a sponge any hints which might render it more fashionable, civilized or refined, and the text of the *Galateo* seemed to offer the kind of common-places which non-academic society was growing used to at the end of the sixteenth century. So it is not surprising that Della Casa's brief and often pithy admonitions found such favour. There is and can be no doubt about his communicative ability. I wish to cast doubt upon *what* he wanted to communicate. Most of my chapter will concern the straightforward adaptation of the rules of *savoir-vivre* to English society, but I wish to introduce a controversial note, to the effect that Della Casa was only incidentally conveying rules of conduct in the *Galateo*. It was as important for him to convey scorn, anger and frustration at the disgusting behaviour which he had met with in a bitter diplomatic career. The *Galateo* is also, in other words, a caricature of his fellow-diplomats, a satire in which Della Casa relieved his personal feelings. His vehicle was the brilliantly adapted courtesy treatise. His clear and open statements against vulgar behaviour in society dissemble his caricaturing of his contemporaries. It is indeed the only item of dissimulation in an otherwise explicit series of injunctions. The more serious and pragmatic attitudes of English translators and imitators put into contrasting relief the caricatural aspect of the original.

There is an element of paradox, almost self-contradiction, in the study of the communicative skills possessed by authors of manuals that teach courtesy. Every courtesy treatise which I know, with the possible exception of the *Galateo*, aims to teach its reader varying degrees of dissimulation.

¹ Alain Pons. "Le thème de la communication dans le *Galatée* de Giovanni Della Casa." *Savoir-vivre I*. ed. A. Montandon. (Lyon: Cesura Éditions, 1990) 11-23.

While that message may be clearly communicated by its author, the lesson taught concerns concealment and often mis-information. Indeed, in my view the most consistent diplomatic and social message to merge from Renaissance manuals is the cultivation of the art of nonchalant dissimulation. In almost every important manual the ultimate non-communicable skill—silence—is somewhere enjoined, and prevarication is an important part of the courtier's ability. It forms the entire subject matter of one very influential treatise, Torquato Accetto's *Della dissimulazione onesta*.² The purpose of such advice, as stated by Accetto, was not to teach falsehood, but to show how to give truth a rest for a while in order to bring it out when more opportune moments come along.

Haly Heron's *Keys of Counsel*,³ published in 1592, pointed to that contemporary difficulty. Even Socrates, Heron suggested, who felt confident about judging a man's temperament and character from his words, would have found it difficult to avoid being deceived in his judgement during the late sixteenth century:

The times also are changed, and with the times the manners of men are altered, their hearts are hardened with untruth, and their smooth tongues are filled with secret phrases of dissembling flattery. Where is that man to be found whose words and deeds are indifferent ? Where does he live whose friendship is faithful ? Nay rather who lives that doth not learn to be disloyal ?

Manuals of *savoir-vivre* also contain the codes which permitted their readers to see through the dissimulation of others, notably their rivals, while at the same time learning to dissemble their own words and actions. Those codes, then, still allow the sensitive and the intelligent to see the truth beneath the veil. I did suggest that one major exception to the general rule about advice on nonchalance or dissimulation is Della Casa's *Galateo*. His chapter on grace is concerned with the positive aspects of that quality and not with the concept of dissembling, as in other manuals, in which grace is often used to cover a multitude of sins. I believe that the omission of any significant reference to that most subtle of diplomatic and social ploys (what Castiglione called *disinvoltura* or *sprezzatura*) distances Della Casa from his fellow manualists.

Although, then, my main concern in this chapter is to assess the fortune of the *Galateo* in its English context, I would not like that impression of caricature in Della Casa's original intention to disappear. It is possible to see in the translated versions the dissipation, if not disappearance, of that caricatural element as the English editors strive to achieve rapid

² Torquato Accetto. *Della dissimulazione onesta* (Firenze, 1661); see note 27.

³ Haly Heron. *Keys of Counsel* (London, 1592) 21.

communicability, by reducing elegant style to practical, easily categorizable aphorisms. Annibale Rucellai, the destinee of Della Casa's advice, suggested that the *Galateo* was written for fun, to show that Tuscan was capable of expressing itself well in a humble, comic style.⁴ What, in his view, Della Casa considered as a thing of little moment was regarded by the barbarian North as a serious handbook of behaviour, a means of reforming society not as they saw it by ridicule and caricature; with the removal of those elements in their more commercial English translations, the *Galateo* becomes a sober, practical manual.

The first and most enduring version of *Galateo* in English was that of Robert Peterson published in 1576. There have been some fine studies of this edition by scholars as renowned as Herbert Reid, J. E. Spingarn, and Antonio Santosuosso, and I do not wish to repeat what they have said so well, particularly in the way they have set this version in its English context.⁵ But it might be worth considering the audience that Peterson may have been writing for. Thomas Browne, one of the sponsors of the volume, a 'Gentleman of Lincoln's Inn' commends the translator in the final dedicatory poem of the introduction:

And as the Authour merits passing well,
So doth my friend deserve as great a meede
That makes a work so hard to understand
So easie that each simple may it reede.

The book itself bears the sub-title *A Treatise of the Manners and Behaviours it Behoveth a Man to use and eschewe in his Familiar Conversation*. It is further elaborated as *A Work very Necessary and Profitable for all Gentlemen or Other*.

That rather off-hand statement and the reference to 'each simple' disguise the fact that this was an edition aimed at an upper-class, even academic audience. Peterson himself was a lawyer and also of Lincoln's Inn. He later translated Giovanni Botero—his *Treatise Concerning the Causes of the Magnificencies of Cities*.⁶ One of his sponsors was Edward Cradock, Lady

⁴ The relevant letters are published by Antonio Santosuosso in *The Bibliography of Giovanni Della Casa: Books, Readers and Critics (1537-1975)* (Firenze, 1979); see, for example, at p. 100, Rucellai's remark to Pier Vettori of 29 January 1559: "Il Galateo fu fatto solo per schero e per vedere come la nostra lingua tollerava quello stile così humile e dimessa, et so che non era stimato dal compositore per cosa di momento alcuno."

⁵ For the record: *Galateo of Maister John Della Casa, Archebishop of Beneventa (sic) or rather a Treatise of the Manners and Behaviours it Behoveth a Man to use and eschewe in his Familiar Conversation* (London, 1576). The same text was reproduced by Walter Darell (see note 9), by Herbert J. Reid, (London, 1892) and by J. E. Spingarn and D. B. Updike (London and Boston, 1914). In 1969 the Da Capo Press, Amsterdam/New York, reprinted anastatically the 1576 text.

⁶ Giovanni Botero (1544-1617) was concerned with a related if much wider topic, the development of urban civilisation, in his *Delle magnificenze delle città* (1588), translated by

Margaret Professor of Theology at Cambridge, and another, Thomas Drant, was Archdeacon of Lewes. The dedicatee of the volume, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was one of the most powerful and influential courtiers in Elizabeth's entourage. The marginal glosses of the rather poorly printed text vary between the *recherché* (there are close references to quotations from Boccaccio and Dante) and the inconsequential, but on the whole the annotations seem directed at an erudite audience. Having said that, it must be added that other more superficial aspects of Della Casa's work are most heavily glossed, probably because traditionally as well as socially they were seen as the most useful. Appropriate dress, for instance, is highlighted on several occasions, as is polite conduct at a banquet. There may be an indication there of the path which other manuals were to follow. More relevant to our purpose, Peterson seems anxious to emphasise the uncluttered quality of Della Casa's advice. There are glosses or marginal headings on *Talke and Communication* (p. 29), *Long talke and discourse* (p. 71), and the comments opposite *Words would be plaine* (p. 75) are emphasised thus:

Our worddes (be it in long discourses or other communication) *must be so plaine, that all the companie may easily understand them:* and withall, for sounde and sense they must be apt and sweete (p. 75; Peterson's Italics).

There are *Gentle Wordes in Communication* (p. 84 - in order not to give offence), *Gestures of the Face and Countenance and other Parties* (p. 119), and *Movinges and Gestures of the Bodie* (p. 121). These and other aspects have been discussed by Alain Pons using the text he himself edited. The point I make is that already in 1576 Peterson was picking out such details for special attention, drawing his audience's eye to them.

It is ironic that England's most classic text of the *Galateo* should be Peterson's, for, as Spingarn demonstrated in his 1914 preface to the third of four reprints, the translator had based much of his work on the anonymous *French* translation published at Lyons in 1573.⁷ Until the modern era, and the popular translation by Pine Coffin, Peterson's was the standard version. Herbert Reid justified a reprint in 1892 with the remark that the *Galateo* was now 'almost forgotten'.⁸

Peterson's translation has been examined and re-edited three times during the past century and those editors have unearthed many details concerning the work. However, one edition of Peterson's work which previous researchers do not seem to have investigated is the pirated version which

Robert Peterson as a *Treatise Concerning the Causes of the Magnificences of Cities* (London, 1606).

⁷ See (note 5) Spingarn's Introduction, *passim*.

⁸ See (notes 5 and 25) Reid's Introduction, p. iii.

Walter Darell appended to his *Short Discourse of the Life of Servingmen*.⁹ More recently Antonio Santosuoso has included the edition without comment in his excellent bibliography. Darell omitted the name of the translator, presumably to imply that the whole volume was his own work, and the date given to his *Discourse* is 1578. Darell's printer was the same Ralphe Newberrie of London, and, not surprisingly, the text of the *Galateo* is precisely that of Peterson from two years earlier. I wish to consider the text of Darell's *Discourse* in relation to the appended *Galateo*.

Darell's volume seems to be an attempt to cash in on a growingly popular market for courtesy manuals, and his conjunction of the *Discourse* and *Galateo* seems an early attempt by a compiler to give value for money without too much effort on his part. What is further interesting about the conjunction of the two texts is the naïvety of Darell's composition when set alongside the sophistication of Peterson and Della Casa. There are in Darell, for instance, puritanical elements which smack of much later moralising treatises. His address *To the Reader*,¹⁰ for example, includes the following homily on idleness:

This one thing I find most true and evident (gentle Reader) that nothing more infecteth the mind of man then the horrible monster idleness: by the which we daily see no small number drenched in the Seas of manifolde miseries. Like as yron, if it be not occupied, will quickly wax rustie: and as a flower or plant placed in fertile soyle, without water will lose the sappe, and become withered: even so the minde of man, if it be not exercised, will eftsoone become dull and alter his qualitie.

The unsophisticated nature of Darell's approach is further evidenced in one of his more stoical 'precepts for Servingmen' expressed in the quatrain:

Who beareth much and medleth least,
Shall scape the sling of chiding chaps;
Who seekes to live at quiet rest,
Must be content what ever haps.

All the courtesy treatises I know have somewhere a declaration about the stoic acceptance of fortune's blows, usually expressed in grandiloquent language, and surprisingly, usually with a naval metaphor. But here is Darell's more or less adolescent mnemonic concerning tolerant forbearance. The juxtaposition of naïve and sophisticated will be a feature of the English manual of *savoir-vivre*.

It is true that Darell periodically introduces into his *Discourse* some learned-looking phrases and in particular certain Latin apophthegms which

⁹ Walter Darell. *A Short Discourse of the Life of Servingmen. Hereunto is also annexed a Treatise concerning Manners and Behaviours* (London, 1578).

¹⁰ The aside, along with the stoic doggerel which follows, immediately precedes Darell's "A prettie and short discourse of the duties of a Servingman."

help add academic respectability to the naive text surrounding them. Thus his admonition against taking the name of the Lord in vain has an admixture of those two elements: "Take heede in any wise of horrible swearing, least that thou incurre God's heavie displeasure: for *Falsa iuratio est damnosa, vera iuratio est periculosa, nulla iuratio est segura*."¹¹ And on the same page as that more solemn warning may be found more down-to-earth exhortations against complaining about one's food, 'Unless those seiest it verie scarce and unreasonable: revile not the cook for the same' (*ibid*).

Such a miscellany of hints on behaviour would seem to indicate that Darell's principal desire was to cash in on the market amongst the upstarts for manuals of behaviour, a market which was to grow exponentially over the following century. It also indicates, if any such evidence were required, that the *Galateo* is already accepted as a practical guide of a similar kind. While Darell does not attempt to define courtesy, he does pay his fee to the courtly tradition in a final phrase with which we may leave his *Discourse for Servingmen*: "What is Honour, Wealth, Beautie, or brave Attire without courtesie ? It is assuredly nothing else but a goodly green tree, which flourisheth with leaves and and blossoms, and bringeth forth no fruite."¹²

The lack of concern for a consistent stylistic register visible in the above quotations is a further proof that what increasingly mattered for Darell was the message and not its elegance of expression, the purveying of advice rather than the cultivation of a style. The kind of advice noted in that last example—a general definition peripheral to courtesy—is typical of the *commonplace*, a word with a special significance for the final half of the sixteenth century when it was fashionable for a newly literate rising social class to compile commonplace books. Witty lines, pithy sayings, literary cameos, proverbs and the like were all grist to the commonplace mill.

Private admonitions, by contrast, were more unscrupulous, more serious, usually not meant for publication, and often addressed to the compiler's children. It is worth recalling that contemporaneous with Darell's compilation are the private thoughts of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, written down in 1584 but published only posthumously.¹³ His *Ten Precepts* quickly ran into four editions between 1617 and 1637 and were pillaged by other contemporary composers of manuals. Here are sharp, realistic precepts systematically categorized, and contrasting, for their toughness and unscrupulousness, with earlier subtleties:

Be sure ever to keep some great man thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles, compliment him often, present [him] with many yet small gifts and

¹¹ *Ibid.* Cii (verso).

¹² *Ibid.* C (verso).

¹³ William Cecil. *Ten Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man's Life* (Edinburgh, 1618) 13.

of little charge, and if thou have cause to bestow any great gratuity let it be then some such thing as may be daily in sight, for otherwise in this ambitious age thou mayest remain like a hop without a pole, live in obscurity and be made a football for every insulting companion to spurn at.

The next development in the popular diffusion of the *Galateo* might now seem more natural. The commonplace here becomes a selling point:

Furnished with varietie of Excellent discriptions, exquisite characters, witty discourses and delightful Histories, Devine and Morrall. Together with invectives against many offenses of the time digested Alphabetically into *common places*.

The strange collection of bric-à-brac which makes up the *Rich Cabinet* of 1616¹⁴ is completed with a garbled and truncated paraphrase of some of Della Casa's advice, *An Epitome of Good Manners*. The sextodecimo format helps confirm the impression of a popularising, easily pocketable encyclopaedia, an even more popular development of Darell's type of miscellany. The anthology is a farrago of moral tales, definitions of cardinal virtues, descriptions of character and other details of ethics, history, and crude psychology, of interest to the browser engaged in such trivia. For ease of reference, headings are supplied to the different subjects, and the so-called *Epitome* also had practical divisions such as 'LOATHSOME AND FILTHY THINGS'¹⁵ the reader is urged, for instance, not to "each to his head, or any part of his body, as if he fished for a louse, to ease himself in publick view." Under another heading, 'BLOWING THE NOSE' the following injunction is made: "We must not blow our nose too lowde nor open the hand-chercher at all to shewe any nasty filthiness."

The rather vulgar admonition here and elsewhere contrasts with the compiler's apparently more genteel aspirations in the sentence following his title which reads "I will here briefly shew you by way of short admonitions how a man should demeane himself with acceptation to all noble societies." And the seriousness of the prohibitions contrasts with Della Casa's witty and sarcastic exaggeration. Compare, for example, the advice on 'blowing the nose' with Della Casa's similar prohibition: "When you have blown your nose you should not open your handkerchief and look inside, as if pearls or rubies might have descended from your brain."

¹⁴ *The Rich Cabinet* (London, 1616) compiled perhaps by Thomas Gainsford (the initials T. G. appear under the Conclusion), though the brief preface is signed by the printer, Roger Jackson.

¹⁵ The headings come after p. 166, in the 28-page *An Epitome of good manners extracted out of the treatise of Mr Iohn Della Casa, called Galatea (sic)*. The *Rich Cabinet* itself is compiled with definitions such as Affinitie, Atheisme, Beautie, Birth, Benefits, etc. (Complimentary allusions under the heading Merchant, indicate the probable kind of destinee of the volume).

If caricature, as I would understand it in Della Casa, is aimed at a sophisticated public, then we may get some idea of the audience targetted by Nathaniel Walker's paraphrase *The Refin'd Courtier*, published in 1663,¹⁶ because here there are few caricatures such as Della Casa created. The subtitle of that edition implies its practical character: *A Correction of Several Indecencies crept into Civil Conversation*. It is, however, dedicated to a nobleman, James, Duke of Monmouth, and specifically aims, not at 'Merchants, Lawyers, (and) Idle Spectators' but at 'Gallants' and 'especially of the choicest part, the Courtier.' His work contains noble or honourable aspirations: "In all your civil addresses, then, be sure you observe this caution, Let not the Courtier in you supplant the friend." And he opens his treatise with a pretentiously erudite quotation from the more than obscure first-century occultist, Apollonius Tyanaeus! Yet his similes vary between the sophisticated and the popular. Thus his view of what Castiglione might have called nonchalance is expressed in a down-to-earth image:

Or not unlike to Barge-men when they row,
They look another way than that they go (p. 135).

More sophisticatedly elsewhere, admonishing his readers against deceitful dissimulation, Nathaniel Walker blends a naive view of the dishonourable nature of such behaviour, with an evident pleasure in the images and similes which reflect dishonest deception:

And yet 'tis ordinary (for Courtiers, too, they say, who should be patrons of heroic actions) like the serpent to crouch and bend in all the flexures of a sweet compliance and instantly to hiss, and turn tail and sting to death (p. 137).

And here's an insight into surgery without anaesthetic: anaesthesia had to be provided by the surgeon's subtlety as can be seen in Walker's next simile:

To cut one's throat with a clean knife, or a keen razor set with oil; like the Chirurgion, who wrapt up his lancelet in a sponge with which, wilest he smooth'd his patient's side he made a deep incision (*ibid.*).

Walker confessed that he had only 'mean knowledge of Italian' and the alternation between sophistication and naïvety, idealism and realism continues throughout his volume. It indicates perhaps his assimilation of several earlier manuals; indeed the contamination of various sources in Walker's paraphrase would make it an excellent topic of research in its own right. As far as *Galateo* studies *tout court* are concerned it is a diverting curiosity. But more obvious translations of the *Galateo* beckon, in particular

¹⁶ *The Refin'd Courtier; or, A Correction of Several Indecencies crept into Civil Conversation* (London, 1663).

two translations from the Latin of Nathan Chytraeus, an edition which itself enjoyed considerable popularity even in Britain where the University Press at Oxford published its own edition in 1630. Incidentally I have not here concentrated at all on the Latin tradition of the treatise, though editions in Latin were published in England in 1580 and 1628.¹⁷

There seems to be only one extant copy of *J. Casa, His Galateus or a Treatise of Manners* published in London in 1701, translated, so the title page continues, by 'Several young gentlemen educated at a private grammar school near Hackney'.¹⁸ I have a pet theory that this particular volume is a typical exercise in translating from Latin. The original text used by the translators was that of 1577 by Nathan Chytraeus and, speaking as an ex-grammar school boy, I believe that the Latin text might have been translated over a long period of time and then offered to the publisher by their enterprising teacher. Translating such a work would thus have a triple purpose—to teach Latin, to achieve a popular publication and simultaneously to inculcate decent behaviour in the young. Robert Ainsworth, the schoolmaster in question who did succeed in having his pupils' translation published, pleads ingratiatingly in his introduction for the patronage of 'Mr S.N. Merchant', father of one of the nine 'pretty lipping translators.' The language of the introduction is unsophisticated, reminiscent, rather, of the style of Dickens's Mr Squeers. Certain errors on the title page, 'A Father instructs his Son', and in the introduction a reference to Nicolaus Casa, reflect the unacademic nature of the volume, which is complemented (after p. 146) with the separate treatise *J. Casa's Offices between Superior and Inferior Friends etc.*

The importance of Ainsworth's publication lay not so much in its rather unsophisticated text as in the audience to which it seems directed. The more humble dedicatee and the parochial and naïve nature of the introductory remarks, as well as the poor quality of printing, indicate that this was a volume aimed at a wide range of middle-class children—it was no longer meant as a treatise for the nobly born.

Confirmation of the new role of Ainsworth's *Galateo* is visible in another publication precisely contemporary with that edition. This was *The School of Manners, or Rules for Children's Behaviour*, compiled by another schoolmaster, John Garretson.¹⁹ The introduction makes a point of the

¹⁷ *Jo. Casae Galateus... seu de morum honestate et elegantia liber* (Oxford, 1580); *Ethica iuvenilis* (Oxford, 1628); Nathan Chytraeus's Latin translation (1577) was also published at Oxford in 1630.

¹⁸ The only copy I have been able to trace is that in the British Library.

¹⁹ *The School of Manners*, (London, 1701). The English text of this edition was reproduced by J. I. Walley, with illustrative contemporary woodcuts (London: The Oregon Press Ltd., 1983); I quote from this last: here, pp. 20-22.

bargain price of the volume “nor, I suppose, is the Cheapness of the Book to some Parents an inconsiderable Excellency”, and goes on to justify its bilingual (Latin and English) format and character, as the grammar-school training comes to the fore again.

It was thought requisite that it should be done both English and Latin. In the Mother Tongue, that none might be below a capacity of being benefited thereby, that have learned to Read; and in the Learned Language, that Lads of greater proficiency might not think it below them; and that it might be for the more general use, being, if Masters think fit, sometimes learned as a Latin Author, as well as barely read over for admonition.

The *Rules* themselves, unlike Ainsworth's *Galateus*, are broken down analytically into easily assimilable and memorable *dicta*, numbered and usually on one or two lines. Publications of this kind help to define two new audiences for such rules of conduct: the ‘polished plebeian’ as he was to be called, and the children of the rising merchant class, educated at local grammar schools. Ainsworth's translation had one potentially useful and influential function. It seems to have provided a good basis for the version published by Lintot two years later, though Lintot, of course, made no such acknowledgement. Indeed he made a point of stating in his introduction that he knew of no other English translation.

Barnaby Bernard Lintot was himself parodied or caricatured by Pope in the *Dunciad* for his uncouth appearance (a ‘dabchick’), and this may have added to his aspirations for self-improvement through reading Della Casa and other manuals of *savoir-vivre*. A prolific publisher of other people's work, Lintot translated the *Galateo* in 1703.²⁰ He seems to have inherited some of Della Casa's scorn for contemporary practices, which lends a certain bite to some of his phraseology: “And yet take them altogether, it is a pretty satisfaction to observe, that the same things are counted indescient amongst us, which were so, near 150 Years ago, in the most polite Country in the World.”

Lintot's rather jaundiced (or realistic) view of the retrograde quality of life in early eighteenth-century England inspired his translation and adaptation of the *Galateo* in 1703. He is literally unapologetic about adjusting to his contemporary English society the Latin text of Nathan Chytraeus as well as some of the practices described therein. The bad Latin, wrote Lintot, obliged him ‘not so much to mind the true import of his words, as what the Subject required’. This and the re-arrangement of the material under systematic headings are brusquely justified: “As to my accommodating the Habits of those Times to our own Age and Country, I think I need make no Apology

²⁰ *Galateo of Manners or Instructions to a Young Gentleman how to behave himself in Conversation* (London, 1703) 2.

for it."

There is certainly a new Anglo-Saxon atmosphere created in this translation, and Lintot comes closer to caricature in his strictures on foppish dress and manners, painting pictures of eighteenth-century fashion, recognizable now from old prints: 'Hair cut round like a Bowl-Dish', 'Beards of a frightful length', 'Hats as broad as an Umbrella' (p. 28). "Beaux, he writes later, in some places will out-do Women (...) they Paint and Patch and use white-Washes for their Faces and Hands" (p. 132). Gaudy clothes should be avoided "for fear some should be tempted to think you are wrapt up in a Petticote of your Mothers" (p. 133).

There are many other examples which startle because of their quotidian ordinariness. Lintot wanted to make his work as useful and obviously practical as possible and he is aware that in this he departs from the original. In view of my remarks about Della Casa as a caricaturist it is interesting to see Lintot dismissing Della Casa's similes as over-elaborate:

His Similes are strowed too thick: now and then they come in by Couples; and agree so ill together that they serve rather to confound than illustrate his Notions. In many places he carries things too high, using wonderful Exaggerations upon slight Occasions (p. 2).

Bernard Lintot's patronage of Pope might well be reflected in the social criticism implicit in his paraphrase of the *Galateo*. He had been in part responsible for publishing the *Rape of the Lock*, and his satirical critique of patched and whitewashed fops reflects a similar disdain. The next widely known adaptation was Richard Graves's version of 1774. Richard Graves was equally concerned with the social practices of his day; indeed his principal claim to fame among his contemporaries was as a social chronicler or even satirist. His study of the *Galateo* might well have proved a few years later the basic inspiration for his *Phlexippus* or *The Aspiring Plebeian* of 1790. And perhaps like Lintot he was also a student of Pope; in at least one of his generalized injunctions, his heroine is named as Belinda.²¹

Graves's translation was dedicated to a member of Parliament, William Skrine, in other words to a person in a new type of political organization with increasing power to change and influence society but without traditional and noble patronage. The *nouveaux riches* and the upstarts had increased since Peterson's day, justifying even more naive or down-to-earth admonitions on their behaviour.

Della Casa's sometimes grotesque examples and *caveats* seem to be accepted by the new translator as positive aids to good behaviour in society,

²¹ *Galateo or a Treatise on Politeness and Delicacy of Manners addressed to a Young Nobleman*, translated by R. Graves, (London, 1774). For the allusion to Belinda's sordid tooth-cleaning habits at table, see p. xv.

not, I think recognized as caricatures. In fact the supplementary admonitions and examples which fill Graves's preface and which derive from general faults noted by Della Casa seem seriously to elaborate those aspects with realistic and personal testimony. For instance Della Casa's warning against picking one's teeth in public produces the following personalised reaction from Graves, concerning a country gentleman (elevated enough to use the title *Armiger*) who borrowed a toothpick from his neighbour at table, a stranger to him: "And having made use of it, wiped it clean and (without the least sense of anything indelicate in the affair) thankfully returned it to the owner."²²

Graves's instance evidently goes beyond Della Casa's trivial example of the dinner guest who rises from the table carrying a toothpick in his mouth like some bird carrying nesting material. Della Casa's simile consists of just seven potent words, but it serves to ridicule and I say caricature. Graves's example carries that behaviour to a further degree of grossness without adding to its quality of caricature. In a similarly realistic observation Graves describes with poker-faced objectivity the merchant (worth £40,000!) who in company deliberately selects a particularly soft piece of waste paper and secretes it in a special pocket prior to going to the lavatory.²³

These and indecorous examples like them, occasionally enlivened by an element of sarcasm, testify to the truth of one of Graves's opening statements, that over two centuries earlier (by the mid-1500s) the Italians had already arrived at a point of refinement both in manners and literature which contrasted severely with a period when the English were emerging from what Graves terms 'Gothicism and barbarity.' But if he were bringing out such examples of his own in 1774 the question remains how far that barbaric age was still present in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The indelicacy of some of Graves's warnings are indictments of his contemporary society. The fashion of carpetting bare boards, for example, evidently carried with it certain social dangers; spitting on carpets is to be discouraged, suggests Graves. And, in a rare ironic footnote²⁴ which acknowledges the practice, he adds the gloss: "By the way, unless carpets were to be changed as frequently as a table-cloth, this custom of spitting on them seems by no means decent or commendable." The habit of spitting is one which recurs again and again in the English courtesy manual. The answer to my earlier question of how far barbarism was still present in the late eighteenth century is, of course, simple. The century was not

²² *Ibid.*, p. xiii. In this and other examples in the notes which follow, Graves's ironic instances certainly come close to Della Casa's caricature.

²³ *Ibid.*, cf. p. xiv.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

necessarily becoming more barbaric but rather society was developing to a point where culture and civility, propelled by increased prosperity, were spreading to traditionally humbler levels of the population.

Richard Graves's version of the *Galateo* was the last major edition before the reprints of Peterson began again in the late nineteenth century, and before the modern era produced the elegant version of R.S. Pine-Coffin of 1958, and the joint workmanlike effort of Eisenbichler and Bartlett in 1990. But it would be incomplete to come to these without mentioning other important manifestations of Della Casa's influence. Apart from the literal English translations, paraphrases such as that of Nathaniel Walker abounded (Antonio Santosuosso claims, conservatively in my view, to identify twenty-one printings of English paraphrases). It is also difficult to decide where to draw a line in identifying undercurrents of the *Galateo* in the thousands of manuals of *savoir-vivre* extant from the post-Renaissance period. The problem is compounded by the presence of translations from French manuals which also assimilated *Galateo* characteristics. One strange, but less problematical, development was the Englishing by William Style of L.G. Dantisco's *Galateo Español* in 1640, published by Lee in London under the sub-title of *The Spanish Gallant* and republished with other additions in 1778, under the main title of *Narcissus*. The book seems to have been treated as a separate manual from the Italian original. The fact that no one collated this text with the other *Galateo* versions indicates the unacademic approach and reinforces the view of them as practical (and commercial) handbooks for the upstart classes.

Herbert Reid did many services to the cause of Italian literary research, most remarkably in the field of Dante studies. In 1892 he engineered the private publication (a run of one hundred copies) of Peterson's 1576 translation, noting its rarity and the fact that the majority of bibliographers seemed unaware of its existence:²⁵

That the *Galateo* is now almost forgotten, may be offered as sufficient justification for the reproduction of what is virtually a sixteenth-century 'Book of Etiquette.'

This private edition seems to have had no repercussions in the world outside the academic sphere, and the proem simply concentrates on an objective survey of previous printings, and on the biographies of Peterson's sponsors. There is no reflection on or of Victorian society, except perhaps, in the quaintly old-fashioned style of Mr Reid. For Reid the 'curious interest' of the book lay in the 'plain spoken exposures and criticisms' of uncultured social habits and indecorous forms of speech prevalent in the

²⁵ See note 5; here p. iii.

mid-sixteenth century. He praises Peterson's rendering into English and declares that his own improvements mainly concern the typographical appearance of the edition, 'slovenly' and 'hastily put together' in the original printing.

Reid by his reprint may well have added to the joint enthusiasms of D.B. Updike, and that doyen of Renaissance critics, J. E. Spingarn. Together they produced a beautiful edition of the Peterson translation printed in 1914 at the Merrymount Press in Boston.²⁶ Spingarn's introduction contains many useful pieces of information concerning the historical interpretation of courtesy and manners. Most of this is unexceptionable, but when he discusses Della Casa's mention of *virtues*, he may well reveal a prejudice typical of a new age of post-Victorian puritanism, and he certainly reinforces my view of the *Galateo* as a caricatural piece. I wish to digress briefly with a swift discussion of the concept of *virtù* mentioned in the first paragraphs of the *Galateo* and with a reflection on Spingarn's view of the vacuousness of these trivial accomplishments.

For Spingarn it was unnecessary "to break so fragile a butterfly as Della Casa's philosophy on any wheel of serious argument. He is interested solely in the superficial aspects of life." In particular Spingarn takes issue with Della Casa's view of virtue. Now, Castiglione had defined the trivial accomplishments of his Courtier as *leggieresse e vanità*, unless they were used to good effect to keep him near the seat of power and so influence his prince. In their way those trivial qualities became virtues as important as apparently grander attributes, the equivalent indeed of the positive qualities which allow Machiavelli's aspirants to power to grasp fortune by the forelock. Agostino Nifo da Sessa was the first to define such trivia as 'courtly virtue, namely a certain kind of particular virtue through which a man becomes a courtier'.²⁷ And Nifo deliberately excludes traditional virtues in order to highlight the new qualities. Guicciardini, for all his pragmatism, described such vanities as profitable in "opening the path to princely favours." Tasso referred, only in part ironically, to 'faking' as 'the greatest virtue of our time', and Torquato Accetto defines virtue, in a devastating series of apparently amoral statements, as dissimulation. Niccolò Strozzi

²⁶ See note 5; Spingarn's reflections come at pp. xiii-xiv.

²⁷ Agostino Nifo da Sessa. *Del libro del Cortigiano* (Genova, 1560); he defines *virtù cortigiana* on pp. 29 and 30. This is necessary reading for critics too ready to accept at face value concepts of 'courtesy' and 'courtly virtues'; with Nifo's views may be compared the following references to those more pragmatic 'virtues': F. Guicciardini, *I ricordi*, edited by R. R. Spongano, (Firenze, 1951) 191; T. Tasso, *Il Malpiglio*, in *Opere*, edited by B. Maier (Milan, 1963-5) V 49; T. Accetto, *Della dissimulazione onesta*, ed. G. Bellonci (Firenze, 1943) (see especially p. 60); N. Strozzi, *Gli Avvertimenti necessari per i Gentiluomini*, edited by J. R. Woodhouse, in "La cortegiana di N. Strozzi." *Studi secenteschi* XXIII (1982) 141-193.

comes near to equating virtue with deceit. In this context Della Casa's innocuous statement, that good manners were very similar to, or the same as, virtues, becomes comprehensible both in a utilitarian sense and in a moral sense. By not giving displeasure one promotes social harmony, but, by pleasing, one can also promote one's own cause more successfully than by disgusting a potential friend or patron. That, says Spingarn, "is a far cry from virtue which in its very essence would seem to be divorced from the idea of conciliating the moods or whims of those about us."

Spingarn was used to dealing with the major works and the more elevated themes of Renaissance literature and it is not difficult to understand why he regarded Della Casa's advice on *savoir-vivre* as fragile. Yet Spingarn gave the *Galateo* its due because imitation of it "made it possible for modern European society to form an organic social whole, with a model of the finished gentleman more or less the same in all countries and in all periods."²⁸ Yet that very judgement may be an indictment of such simplistic interpretations. An admonition against indecorously blowing one's nose, or rudely yawning or picking one's teeth is undoubtedly no more than adolescent in flavour, however much we may recognise them still nowadays in older colleagues. Indeed those precepts recur as the basis for rules for children's behaviour in future centuries. But if we consider them as satirical reflections on what we normally regard as high authority, pompous diplomacy or effete nobility, they reduce these to ironic caricatures. During the 18th century in Italy Giuseppe Parini did the same with greater brilliance in his *Day in the life of a young nobleman*, and in our own century Evelyn Waugh and Lawrence Durrell have given us insights into the pomposity of the superficial.²⁹ In Della Casa's case the *Galateo* also provided him with a vehicle for giving vent to his feelings through the manual of *savoir-vivre*.

R.S. Pine Coffin's translation of 1958 was the first to be certifiably translated into English directly from the Italian.³⁰ It is also the most elegant translation of the treatise, matching for its urbanity and subtlety of language Della Casa's original prose. The edition, in the widely popular Penguin Classics series, was complemented with the fullest-introduction so far written in English on the figure and work of Della Casa and with an appendix containing the best short essay in English on courtesy books in

²⁸ J. E. Spingarn (see note 5), p. x.

²⁹ G. Parini. *Il giorno* (1763-5); one modern edition is that of Dante Isella (Milano-Napoli, 1969); Evelyn Waugh and Lawrence Durrell's ironic output, too well-known to require comment here, includes such classics as *Put out more Flags* (Waugh) and *Esprit de Corps* (Durrell). In this context, too, it is worth recalling the effect of Nancy Mitford's collection, *Noblesse Oblige* of 1956, and the fatuous influence it continues to exert on the English middle classes.

³⁰ G. Della Casa. *Galateo*, translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958).

England in the *Galateo* tradition. Academically, then, this is a highly respectable volume. It is also interesting to note that Pine-Coffin considers the *Galateo* to be as relevant to his own day as it was to Della Casa's, and it is possible to see, in the distinction which Pine-Coffin makes between the practices of etiquette and the principles of good manners, a logical explanation for the universality of the precepts.

A survey of this kind would not be complete without mentioning the work of Antonio Santosuosso, whose patient compilations in particular have given English scholars a good working bibliography, and the most recent translation of Konrad Eisenbichler and Kenneth Bartlett who claim to have prepared the most literal English translation of the Italian original. To this last they have added a general introduction and notes thus creating, in conjunction with the research of Santosuosso, a useful tool for English students of Della Casa's manual.³¹

Three hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the *Galateo* was first published. I feel, rather as Pine-Coffin did, that Della Casa's admonitions, or many of them, are unfortunately still as relevant today as they always have been. My delicate attempts to hint that friends and colleagues should not yawn and talk at the same time have always failed, and I continue to be assailed by periodic incomprehensible braying from the person who:

When he yawns, howls or brays like an ass; or someone who, with his mouth wide open persists in wanting to speak and pursue his argument, producing thus the voice, or rather the noise, that a deaf-mute makes in his efforts to speak.

It is a slight consolation when one sees one's fellows peering into their handkerchieves or carrying a toothpick in the side of their mouths, to remember that Della Casa felt similar irritation, and it also helps if you mentally attach an ass's ears to the yawner or a bird's feathers to the toothpicker, or if you tell yourself that the nose-blower looks as if he's expecting pearls or rubies to have descended from his brain.³² When the admonitions fail, the caricature remains.

³¹ G. Della Casa. *Galateo*, translated by Konrad Eisenbichler and Kenneth R. Bartlett (Ottawa, 1990).

³² I quote from G. Della Casa. *Galateo*, edited by P. Pancrazi, (Firenze, 1949); the translations are my own and come from chapter III of that edition.

MICHAEL STEPPAT

SOCIAL CHANGE AND GENDER DECORUM:
RENAISSANCE COURTESY

Two voices from the Italian Renaissance may serve to illuminate the period's concern with the liberty of fusing individual and social identity. The first is famous enough:

You shall be allowed to determine your nature without constraints according to your own judgment, with which I have entrusted you.... I have created you as neither celestial nor terrene, neither mortal nor immortal, so that you may fashion yourself freely, by your own power, modelling your being into the form you desire. You may degenerate to a lower, beastly existence, or you may, if you wish, be reborn into a higher, divine dimension.... Who will not admire such a chameleon as we have created ? or who will admire anything more than such a creature ?¹

This, of course, is Pico della Mirandola's God, explaining to man—literally, since he is addressing Adam and not Eve—his exalted capacity of self-fashioning.

The second voice is Lord Julian's, the defender of women in the third Book of Castiglione's *Courtier* (Hoby's version). To Gasper's claim that 'every woman wisheth she were a man,' Julian answers in a sudden burst of inspiration: "The silly poor creatures wish not to be a man to make them more perfect, but to have liberty, and to be rid of the rule that men have of their own authority challenged over them."²

The emphasis by both speakers on constraints, and on ways to challenge them, *nullis angustiiis coercitus* in Pico's Latin, informs some salient features of Renaissance thought concerning social self-definition, with implications for English courtesy theory. To examine these implications, it will be necessary to review briefly some key features of doctrine concerning

¹ See Pico Della Mirandola. *De dignitate hominis*. Intr. Eugenio Garin (Bad Hombourg, Berlin & Zürich, 1968): "Tu, nullis angustiiis coercitus, pro tuo arbitrio, in cujus manu te posui, tibi illam pae finies. ...Nec to caelestem neque terrenum, neque mortalem neque immortalem fecimus, ut tui opsius quasi arbitrius honorariusque plastes et fictor, in quam malueris tute formam effingas. ...Poteris in superiora quae sunt divina ex tui animi sententia regenerari. ...Quis hunc nostrum chamaeleonta non admiretur ? aut omnino quis aliud quicquam admiretur magis ?" (pp. 28, 30). The translation is mine.

² See Castiglione. *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. Hoby, intr. J. H. Whitfield (London & New York, 1975) 200.

the Renaissance serving-man at court. Against the foil of this context, it will be possible to show more clearly the special orientation of what is probably the most prominent courtesy text of the English literary Renaissance, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Surprisingly enough, this monumental work is only given scant attention in Frank Whigham's magisterial study of Renaissance courtesy, *Ambition and Privilege*.³ Inferences in Spenser's courtesy theory as to gender decorum will not only link the two quotations given above but also illuminate his poetic theory.

How significant is the call to be *sui ipsius plastes et fctor* (again in Pico's original) for the Renaissance courtier? Throughout the sixteenth century, a dynamic social process in England can be observed in which an established sector felt the need to create and redefine its constitutive identity, while the rising non-aristocratic classes attempted to refashion their status.⁴ The widely accepted view of the gentleman as an example for the lower classes, as governor or leader, a view expounded and popularized by Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke Named The Governor*, entails a need to explain what sets him off from the other social groups. The need, accordingly, became a social game. Contemporary interest in teaching distinction, vital for upholding a morally contaminated metaphysic of order and degree, spawned a whole corpus of prose writings with such predictably generic titles as 'Institutions, Moral methods, Courtiers, Governors, Complete Gentlemen, Schoolmasters, Quintessences of wit, Blazons of gentry, Books of Honour and arms,' and the like. Ruth Kelso has collected an extensive bibliography of such works.

It is striking to see how much the difference of class is talked about, how much the gentle class (in Sir William Segar's terminology,⁵ all tiers of the aristocracy) needs to be taught what it takes to be gentle. The main interest of most of these writings was to show how the male individual who seeks to define his social status by membership in a gentlemanly class is a race of his own, needing to maintain an essential difference of social verticality. At issue is, on the one hand, the customary distinction between moral and

³ Reference is to F. Whigham. *Ambition and Privilege: the Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1984).

⁴ I am drawing on information as given in R. Kelso. 'The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century.' *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 14 (1929). Repr. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964; L. Stone. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); item, 'Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700.' *Past and Present* 33 (1966): 17-55. See also Wallace MacCaffrey. 'Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics,' *Elizabethan Government and Society*. Ed. S.T. Bindoff, Joel Hurstfield and C.H. Williams (London, 1961) 95-126, and Lawrence Stone. 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640,' *Past & Present* 28 (1964): 41-80. I am aware that some of Stone's conclusions are to be taken with care.

⁵ See Sir William Segar. *Honor Military and Civill, contained in Foure Bookes* (London, 1602) 51.

social qualities, the distinction between a 'gentle-hearted' person (as the king is called in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Part 3) and 'gentlefolks' (a class distinction with which Gloucester is obsessed in *Richard III*). To belong to the class of 'gentlefolks,' an individual must be enjoy a better education, display more refined manners, be able to spend generously, be allowed to wear more sumptuous clothes—and wear them with more grace. This vital interest as the sixteenth century progressed needs to be explained within a pattern of social change.

The nobility as a real class suffered from an identity crisis on account of its loss of what used to be its proper business, military service and a knightly code of chivalry. Armed service, military training, and martial *virtus* were going distinctly out of fashion—a trend that found expression also in the poetic literature and drama of the later sixteenth century. In the tumultuous fifteenth century, by contrast, the war-lords needed the brutal skills of the armed servant or retainer, who for his part was half-soldier and in many cases half-bandit. During that same century, it was chiefly birth that determined rank and status.

By contrast, under the early Tudors emphasis shifted to civil and administrative obligations. Accordingly, the dividing line between gentlemen or the lower nobility and the yeoman or freeholder class was punctured. This development, opening courtly awards to those who through education cultivated the suave skills of the literate administrator, was supported to some degree by the Reformation with its emphasis on the identity and conscience of the individual person. With the decline in chivalry, the aristocracy's nominal power remained, but its substantial base was becoming questionable.

Social opportunity was centralized in the royal court, which became the chief means of rising. In the course of the century there was an increasing convection in terms of unprecedented vertical mobility, with widespread straining against the fetters of social demarcation. There is an interesting comment on the period by a contemporary, Aegremont Ratcliffe, in his dedication of *Politique Discourses* in 1578:

Who ever saw so many discontented persons: so many yrked with their owne degrees: so fewe contented with their owne calling: and such number desirous, & greedie of change, & novelties? Who ever heard tel of so many reformers, or rather deformers of estates and Common weales... And to be short: such straunge and souden alteration in all estates?... The Gentleman, doth he not shoot at the marke of Nobility?... would not the Lawyer (think ye) agreeably accept the title of a Lord ?⁶

⁶ Aegremont Ratcliffe, *Politique Discourses. Treating of the Differences and Inequalities of Vocations as well publique. as private. ... trans. out of French, by Aegremont Ratcliffe, esquire.* (London, 1578), fol. A3b.

Ratcliffe's tone combines observation with indignation. When reformers of prestabilized and ordered degree are exposed rhetorically as deformers, a sociological observation becomes moralized—in a manner characteristic of the period—as cause and effect are collapsed. Ratcliffe's style gains affective appeal by his hammering home of a string of rhetorical questions.

For that matter, it is instructive to compare his discourse with a similar string of questions taken from a popular though somewhat earlier educational work, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*. Wilson asks:

What manne I praye you beinge better able to maintayne him selfe by valeante courage, then by liuing in base subiection: would not rather loke to rule like a lord, then to lyue lyke an vnderlynge: if by reason he were not perswaded that it behoueth euerye man to lyue in his owne vocation, and not to seke anye hygher rowme, then whereunto he was at the first appoynted?... Who woulde trauaile and toyle with the sweate of his browes? Yea, who woulde for his kynges pleasure aduenture and hasarde his life, if witte hadde not so wonne men, that they thought nothing more nedefull in this world, nor anye thing wherunto they were more bounden: then here to liue in their duty, and to traine their whole lyfe accordynge to their callynge.⁷

This is not the place to enter into the significance of the underlying creed of rationalized *vocatio*, which, as in the Archbishop's parable of the honeybees in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, is inherently ambivalent. Like Ratcliffe, Wilson sniffs at the climber. But his tone reveals a very different kind of uneasiness. Every man is to observe proper degree, to be sure, but what is to keep him there? Wilson's key words are the 'reason' of persuasion and 'witte.' Subtextually he inquires into the qualities that make class identity possible. Rank is not a category preordained or absolutely given, but one that is achieved, as 'valeante courage'—social rather than martial virtue—becomes the quality that lifts a man to higher and even noble status, enabling him to become his own *plastes et fictor*.

For the privileged elite, those who are used to lording, there is thus considerable need of a defensive weapon able to ensure collective survival. This weapon is provided by Wilson in terms of rhetorical education. Instruction in persuasive strategies can thus serve the needs of containment, but likewise also the self-ascriptive needs of climbers: hence the market for an Art of Rhetoric is secure and wide. If defensive ability rests on rhetorical power, not necessarily on substantial superiority, submission on the part of what Wilson calls 'vnderlynges' conversely depends on the inability to recognize that power is inscribed in rhetorical function. Wilson has neither a concept of preordained hierarchy nor one of meritocracy; what counts is not

⁷ Thomas Wilson. *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553). (New York: Da Capo, 1969, The English Experience 206) sig. A.ii.

substance but wit, not the deed but the word.

For this connection, Michel Foucault's analysis of power relations has explanatory force: as he describes the process, such relations "permeate... and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse"—the discourse of persuasive language systems.⁸ Renaissance literature of conduct, a characteristic 'margin of knowledge,' had its origin when, as the texts by Ratcliffe and Wilson have suggested, the sense of an aristocratic identity was being threatened by the encroachment of a small army of young men feeling left out of the cycle of recognized achievement and privilege.

The most restless among these were the crowd of younger brothers and sons as well as the lower gentry, who had little or no patrimony or inheritance. Lawrence Stone has met with little serious contradiction in his fundamental analysis of the 'century of mobility, 1540 to 1640,' when "English society experienced a seismic upheaval of unprecedented magnitude."⁹ Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of the Merchant Taylors' School and teacher to Edmund Spenser, is graphic in his fears that "To have so many gaping for preferment, as no gulf hath store enough to provide... how can it be but that such shifters must needs shake the very strongest pillar in that state where they live?"¹⁰ Mulcaster's architectural image, corresponding to Ratcliffe's notion of the deformation of preordained harmony, reveals a static conservatism.

The literature of gentlemanly training, in this situation, came to serve rather diverse purposes. Its initial *raison d'être* was the bridling of upward mobility. A good example is Hoby's version of Castiglione's *Courtier*, a book devised, in the author's phrase, "to disgrace therefore many untowardly assheads, that through malapertness think to purchase them the name of a good courtier."¹¹ This treatise met the task of survival and security for a courtly elite in a hostile world in which that group saw itself threatened by instability and dislocation. Castiglione is concerned not only with achieving greater professionalism for the ruling elite, but also with social containment, the disgracing of upstarts.

Unfortunately, however, the "assheads" too could read. And the signifiers of elitist texts could serve a contrasting purpose. When Keper's translated Romei's *Courtiers Academie* in 1598, he expressed fear that his work might

⁸ See Michel Foucault. 'Two Lectures.' *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York, 1981), 78-108; here: 93 for the 'margins of knowledge.'

⁹ Stone, 'Social Mobility,' 48.

¹⁰ Richard Mulcaster's *Positions* (1581). Ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New York, 1970) 85.

¹¹ Castiglione 29.

expose a lofty original to ‘malignant eies’: “knowledge being an ornament, most befitting those noble or honorable, who command... it is therefore requisite (say they) that high wisdom, and excellent workes, shuld be concealed from common sight, lest they through equall experience, and knowledge in things (according to the ordinary conditions thereof) puffed up, shake off likewise that humility of spirit, which shuld comprehend them vnder the obedience of laws and magistrates.”¹² Keper’s apprehension that the democratic motivation of ‘equall experience’ would erode hierarchy proved, of course, to be prophetic.

In this struggle, the established sector employed a particularly insidious weapon, forged out of Castiglione’s concern with the art and discipline of courtesy. Distinction could not possibly rest on individual achievement, some personal quality to be acquired by active effort: Sir Thomas Smith in 1583 frowned at the ‘cheapness’ of gentlemen in England, who gained their status by merit of education in the universities or the Inns of Court.¹³ In place of training and exertion, the aristocratic male self had to be shown as a quality already given, almost like birth—birth in itself being inadequate because, in an ideological twist, all families could trace their descent scripturally back to Adam. As identity becomes circumscribed in symbol, the nobleman is assumed to behave *a priori* in certain ways, as the sociological ascription of nobility native gives way to a cultural construction which is given the sanction of nature: social identity is that of a natural self.

Mobility, accordingly, either upward or downward, is little more than illusion. Aristocratic difference, that is, in the pursuit of becoming *plastes et fctor* of one’s own elevation, is the conspicuous absence of effort or of *negotium*. Sir Thomas Smith defined the rising class of gentlemen as those who—like academics—can live without manual labour. The courtier, too, is exempted from such a need, but his essentialist distinction—and this is the weapon I mentioned—is absolute. Hoby’s Castiglione describes it as follows:

I... finde one rule that is most generall, which in this part (me thinke) taketh place in all things belonging to a man in word or deede, above all other. And that is to eschue as much as a man may, and as a sharpe and daungerous rocke, too much curiousnesse, and (to speake a new word) to use in everye thing a certaine disgracing to cover arte withall, and seeme whatsoever he doth and saith, to doe it without paine, and (as it were) not

¹² Annibale Romei. *The Courtiers Academie* (1585). Trans. I. Keper (1598). New York: Da Capo, 1969), sig. A3r.

¹³ Sir Thomas Smith. *De republica Anglorum. The manner of government or policie of the realme of England* (London, 1583) 39-40.

minding it.¹⁴

The rhetorical precept of *ars est celare artem* thus becomes the hallmark of courtly power. For that matter, the analogy with rhetorical practice is appropriate in what appears to be an active effort of textual invention, as Hoby's Count Lewis translates and deconstructs his task of 'disgracing assheads' into a 'disgracing' of 'art.' Hoby's text, in struggling with its original, undermines its own tendency towards the syllogistic protocol of logocentrism.

For that matter, it is in its social manifestation that the doctrine of fashioning reveals its own internal instability as Pico's encomium of the creature who is *nullis angustis coercitus* cancels out its initial stress on liberty by coming down heavily on the lexical closure of narrowness and coercion. Accordingly, it is social pressure that necessitates the discourse of shaping identity.

But to return to Hoby: 'Recklesnesse,' as he continues the argument, becomes 'the true fountaine from the which all grace springeth,'¹⁵ so that it is not the performance that counts but the way it is perceived. Thus, it is the mirror presented by his audience that constitutes a courtier's identity. Recklessness, as Hoby explains its synecdochical quality, makes action "to bee esteemed much more in effect than it is." Francis Bacon agrees that "If you dissemble sometimes your knowledge of that you are thought to know, you shall be thought another time to know that [i.e., what] you know not."¹⁶ In this internally distanced *creatio ex nihilo*, as Bacon knows better than Shakespeare's *Lear*,¹⁷ dissembling and pretence are transvalued into ornaments of conduct, a metamorphosis worthy of Pico's image of the 'chamaeleon.'

But it is also one worthy of Renaissance literary theory. George Puttenham in *The Art of English Poesy* describes figures as 'instruments of ornament' to be employed in 'guilefull' talk.¹⁸ Poetical figures deceive the hearer's mind to a pleasant mental condition of 'mirth and sollace' (p. 129), fulfilling the purpose of establishing the servitude of auricular *enargia* to sensible *energia*. What is more, poetry's 'chiefe profession' is '*beau semblant*' (132), a trope that, together with its corollary of 'false semblant,' makes up the figure of *allegoria*, which Puttenham terms 'the Courtier' and

¹⁴ Castiglione 45-46.

¹⁵ Castiglione 48.

¹⁶ Francis Bacon. 'Essay XXXII, Of Discourse,' *Essays*, intr. Michael J. Hawkins (London, 1972) 103.

¹⁷ See also Bacon's essay LIV (Of Vain-Glory): 'It often falls out that somewhat is produced of nothing; for lies are sufficient to breed opinion, and opinion brings on substance.' (158)

¹⁸ See George Puttenham. *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589). (Menston: Scolar, 1968) 128 (Bk. 3 Ch. 7).

defines as coming into being "when we speake one thing and thinke another, and... our wordes and our meanings meete not." (155) 'Duplicitie,' the 'sence translatiue' of dissembling, thus is "the chief ringleader and captaine of all other figures, either in the Poeticall or oratorie science."

The profession of a courtier, in Puttenham's definition, is "in plaine terms, cunninglie to be able to dissemble." In accordance with such an aestheticizing of courtly power, Puttenham cites the imperial doctrine of domination: *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. Clearly, such aestheticizing can serve social demarcation as the very factor that links young academics to the aristocracy—*otium*—becomes translated in a sleight-of-hand dialectic into a species of *negotium*, Hoby's 'too much diligence.' Such social *negotium* corresponds directly to Puttenham's *periergia*, the rhetorical vice of 'ouermuch curiositie.' It is symbolic performance that counts, the identification of ornament and substance.

In other words, the hermeneutic of Renaissance courtly power is allegorical, the gentleman's public identity and the social purposes of poetic art becoming two sides of the same coin. Allegory, too, is the stated genre of that major courtesy book of the English Renaissance, Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, whose place needs to be examined in the context of such patterns of social development.

Spenser has devised his *opus magnum*, he tells us and Raleigh in the appended Letter, as a 'continued Allegory, or darke conceit,'¹⁹ a concept which may remind us of Puttenham's twinning of allegorical sense as 'darkenes and duplicitie.'²⁰ Spenser declares that his design is to colour with 'historicall fiction' the 'generall end' of the whole work, which is 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline.' The fiction thus becomes fused with the idea of fashioning, joining together each of the twin concepts found in Pico's oration on dignity, *plastes et fctor*, to subsume the task of shaping individual identity under the poet's divine vocation as *poietes* or maker—in keeping with Puttenham, and of course with Sidney's apologetic poetology.

Spenser himself thus aligns his work with the educative aims of the courtesy genre. His design is analogous to that of his friend, the humanist Lodowick Bryskett, whose *Discourse of Civil Life* (published in 1606 but probably written in 1582) carries the subtitle 'Containing the ethic part of moral philosophy: fit to instruct a gentleman in the course of a virtuous life.'²¹ For the present purpose, it will suffice to call attention to some

¹⁹ See Edmund Spenser. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton (London & New York : Longmans).

²⁰ Puttenham 163.

²¹ See Lodowick Bryskett. *A Discourse of Civill Life* (1606). Ed. Thomas E. Wright (Northridge, Cal., 1970).

striking aspects of Spenser's design as against the large horizon (in Jauß's sense) of the period's courtesy genre. Spenser divides his epic into six completed Legends, each named for a particular moral virtue—holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice and finally courtesy.

The sequence itself is idiosyncratic: the first three are private, the last three public virtues; other groupings are possible. Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Governor* begins with prudence and goes on to place temperance near the end, omitting holiness and courtesy entirely—the latter being dissolved into 'majesty' and 'affability.'²² Nor does Bryskett have much to say about courtesy as a moral virtue. Spenser structures his epic as a consecutive series of labours enjoined on the knights serving Gloriana, the Faery Queen, each of whom is sent out by her into faeryland to fulfil his individual quest. What is interesting about Spenser's sixth completed Legend, in which Sir Calidore champions the virtue of courtesy in setting out to capture the Blatant Beast, the monstrous defamation that poses the greatest threat to communicative order, is that it has distinct points of contact with, but also of departure from, the concerns of Renaissance courtesy theory as outlined above.

What, then, does Spenser say about the subject of his final and culminating Book? 'Not a fayrer flowre' exists among the virtues than courtesy, he declares (6. Proem. 4), "Which though it on a lowly stalke doe bowre, / Yet brancheth forth in braue nobilitie." The emphasis on lowliness and humility, which is repeated in various places in the Legend, links the allegory of courtesy closely with the culminating allegory of the previous Legend, where the court of Mercilla had shown God-given mercy and humility to be the fulfilment of justice. From that court, which has little in common with Castiglione's vividly humanized court of Urbino, Spenser derives a link with princely panegyric:

Of Court it seemes, men Courtesie doe call,
For that it there most vseth to abound,
And well beseemeth that in Princes hall
That vertue should be plentifully found' (6. 1. 1).

If this sounds as though courtesy's home is no longer in the court, Spenser is careful to apostrophize his queen as 'patterne' for "The goodly praise of Princely curtesie." (6. Pro. 6) Even so, Spenser's 'soueraine Lady Queene,' as the proem to this Legend describes her, is a pattern of courtesy placed ambiguously between antiquity and the poet's present, so that the panegyric is distanced from the contemporary and real experience of the actual queen. For the most part, Spenser avoids the question of the courtier's

²² See Sir Thomas Elyot. *The Book named The Governor* (1531). Ed. S. E. Lehmborg (London & New York, 1962).

professional and defensive status, as the Legend's initial stress on courtesy's lowliness already suggests.

In fact, he drives his treatment to a point of revulsion against the courtly practice of rivalries of power when he shows his eponymic knight, Calidore, who is bound in service to his Faery queen, seeking to escape from that practice for an unlimited period—and does not condemn him. Resembling those treatises that seek to distinguish between a courtier's innate and acquired qualities and that emphasize class distinctions, Spenser highlights the value of natural grace:

What vertue is so fitting for a knight,
 Or for a Ladie, whom a knight should loue,
 As Curtesie, to beare themselues aright
 To all of each degree, as doth behoue ?
 For whether they be placed high aboue,
 Or low beneath, yet ought they well to know
 Their good, that none them rightly may reproue
 Of rudenesse, for not yeelding what they owe:
 Great skill it is such duties timely to bestow.
 Thereto great helpe dame Nature selfe doth lend:
 For some so goodly gracious are by kind,
 That euery action doth them much commend,
 And in the eyes of men great liking find;
 Which others, that haue greater skill in mind,
 Though they enforce themselues, cannot attaine.
 For euerie thing, to which one is inclin'd,
 Doth best become, and greatest grace doth gaine:
 Yet praise likewise deserue good thewes, enforst with paine.
 (6. 2. 1-2)

Spenser conceives of a stratified society in which degree becomes morally meaningful by differentiated conduct, a variant of the Aristotelian justice of *sum cuique*. Class-consciously, and like Castiglione, Spenser prefers those "goodly gracious by kind" to those who, though endowed with "greater skill in mind"—the professional expertise depreciated by the courtier—seek to attain such grace by painful effort. Later in the Legend, in the ninth canto, this priority is illustrated in the rival wooing of a rustic maid, Pastorella, by both Calidore and a fumbling shepherd, Coridon, who vainly tries to emulate the knight's *sprezzatura*.

The resemblance to the courtesy doctrine of courtly semblance, however, all but ends there, or rather it is a thin overlay. For by the time we witness the courtship of Pastorella, the knight has exited the world of courtly pressure, the masculine genre of epic, in favour of the more feminine and anticourtly mode of pastoral romance as an alternative home for courtesy. This escapist truancy is carefully prepared for in the Legend's structure. Much earlier, half-way through the Legend's third canto, Calidore has

pursued his foe out of the poem, leaving the foreground to a subplot. When he reenters, he spontaneously responds to pastoral topoi, an aging shepherd's critique of the royal court's 'gay showes,' 'pride,' 'ambition' and 'vainnesse.' Agreeing, Calidore seeks to refashion his social identity, since, as he claims, "in each mans self... It is, to fashion his owne lyfes estate": seeking to become his own *plastes et fictor*, he turns away from his calling.

... Now surely syre, I find,
That all this worlds gay showes, which we admire,
Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre
Of life, which here in lowlinesse ye lead,
Fearelesse of foes, or fortunes wrackfull yre,
Which tosseth states, and vnder foot doth tread
The mightie ones, affrayd of euery chaunges dread.

That euen I which daily doe behold
The glorie of the great, mongst whom I won, ...
Now loath great Lordship and ambition. (6. 9. 27-28)

What Calidore here critiques is the shadowy show of the courtier's obsession with perception, semblance and appearance, the ceaseless masculine competition for place and rank and the underlying dread of displacement and social decline, dread also of what Spenser's teacher Mulcaster had called seditious 'shifters.'

This is to some extent pastoral commonplace. It is possible, however, to be even more specific in historical localization. Looking again at the text of Calidore's revulsion, we find him admitting that with one part of his mind he 'admires' or has admired such shows and shadows. This is a loaded verb. In the cantos preceding Calidore's reappearance and his expression of loathing, Spenser has introduced a lady, Mirabella, as surrogate for the eponymic knight.

This lady's story is significant for Spenser's treatment of courtesy. It is told at length in the canto immediately preceding Calidore's return into the poem. When she is first introduced in the seventh canto, and before she is ever named, it is repeatedly stressed how much she is 'admired'—Calidore's verb, and one half of her name. Her name itself links her with the eponymic hero: *bella* corresponds to his *kalos*, in a chiastic inversion. And indeed, her bodily attraction inverts the natural courtesy the knight embodies:

She was a Ladie of great dignitie,
... deckt with wondrous giftes of natures grace,
That all men did her person much admire,
And praise the feature of her goodly face,
The beames whereof did kindle louely fire
In th'harts of many a knight, and many a gentle squire.
...

For beautie is more glorious bright and clere,
 The more it is admir'd of many a wight,
 And noblest she, that serued is of noblest knight.

...
 What cared she, who sighed for her sore,
 Or who did wayle or watch the wearie night ?
 Let them that list, their lucklesse lot deplore;
 She was borne free, not bound to any wight,
 And so would euer liue, and loue her owne delight.

...
 Whylest she, the Ladie of her libertie,
 Did boast her beautie had such soueraine might,
 That with the onely twinkle of her eye,
 She could or saue, or spill, whom she would hight.
 What could the Gods doe more, but doe it more aright ?
 (6. 7. 28-31)

Her 'wondrous gifts,' corresponding to the *doron* of Calidore's name, are those of 'natures grace,' as Calidore's own courtesy is 'planted natural.' In radical contrast to him, however, Mirabella embodies pride and insolent vanity, disdaining her suitors in a Petrarchan parody. The body imagery of attractiveness becomes an image of absolute gender power ('twinkle of her eye'), with a suggestion of godlikeness close to the idea of her being God's deputy.

Two explanations may be offered for this counter-image to courtesy. First, Mirabella's insistence on her liberty from men returns the argument to Lord Julian's inspired declaration on women's misery: that women "wish to have liberty, and to be rid of the rule that men have of their own authority challenged over them." That is to say, Spenser's exposition on courtesy picks up both of the opening quotations in figuring a wish to fashion an anti-courtly identity in reaction against the perversion of female liberty from male domination.

This latter emphasis leads to a second explanation for Mirabella. Her sovereign power and liberty in rejecting suitors are surely meant to recall, howbeit from afar, Queen Elizabeth's own practice. Spenser is writing in the early 1590s, when the Queen was aging; Mirabella recalls (at 6. 8. 20) that it was "In prime of youthly yeares" that she was thronged by suitors. A number of lexical collocations (sovereign, bright, fire) link the description of Mirabella's exercise of courtly love in the seventh canto with the Legend's opening panegyric to the Queen and her court, an idealizing representation tending towards a mythic antiquity. Picking out these collocations is not arbitrary, for they occur nowhere else in the Legend.

It would seem from this connection that Spenser fulfils his intention to circuit courtesy in the Queen—"Then pardon me, most dreaded Soueraine, / That from your selfe I doe this vertue bring, / And to your selfe doe it

returne againe”(6. Pro. 7)—by subverting the idealizing image of natural grace in the satirical figure of Mirabella, a figure that expresses discontent with the virgin Queen’s lordship over male suitors and by extension over male subjects. The poem ‘returns’ courtesy to the Queen by way of the causal nexus between the narratives of Mirabella and that disillusioned courtier, Calidore. The subtextual experience of this courtly power structure goes some way to explain Calidore’s desire to escape the rat-race of collective courtship.

Such a disillusioned concept of courtesy is, finally, significant for Spenser’s understanding of poetic art. As mentioned before, the task of fashioning identity is the poet’s, as Spenser declares, yet according to Puttenham poetic *energia* is an art of duplicity, beguiling and inveigling the mind. (That emphasis, incidentally, goes beyond Aristotle and Quintilian, who regard ‘*energeia*’ as a formal and structural mode of movement or ‘*kinesis*.’) Calidore’s natural grace, his knowledge of how to ‘place’ and to deal decorously with each social degree, is described early in Spenser’s book of courtesy as an art of ‘stealing hearts’ (6. 1. 2)—and that sounds close to Puttenham’s emphasis on the ‘beau’ or perhaps even the ‘false semblant’ of ornamental duplicity. Spenser’s poem of courtesy harbours a warning against its own tendency toward ideal images: such images, he seems to be aware, exercise a subtle power over the reader, an aesthetic version of the *dissimulare-regnare* nexus postulated by Puttenham.

A glance, once again, at the Elizabethan court machinery and its constitutive ideology may help to explain the anomalies of gender decorum as well as Spenser’s poetic representation. For the crowd of those with little in hand and much cause for ambition, the gentlemanly profession of serving-men at court—the idea of service being borrowed from amour courtois—was the prime opportunity of security and prestige. We need to imagine what Whigham describes as the “only apparently paradoxical scene of a court thronged with suitors begging for a chance to ‘serve’ their royal mistress... These myriad acts of grasping submission constituted a collective obeisance that reaffirmed the ideological power base of the royal presence.”²³ By the last decade of the century, this myth of court as courtship had become little better than a farce. With careful modulation, Spenser found a way to express his dissatisfaction.

In his poetic exploration of educative fashioning, he fulfils the object of ethical *energia* (to use Puttenham’s terminology once again) by taking seriously the more unsettling implications of *enargia*: if an idealizing poesis of conduct belongs with the figure of allegory to the sphere of deceptive ornament, then Calidore’s quest for courtesy cannot achieve a closure or

²³ Whigham 11-12.

completion, the Blatant Beast cannot be quelled for long—indeed at the Legend's (and the whole poem's) end he is set free to wreak more havoc 'then he had done before.'

The poetry of conduct, that is, by inveigling the mind to 'mirth and sollace,' turns a dream coloured by pleasing 'historicall fiction' into a nightmare. And this happens because Spenser's fictive strategy 'shatters the mirror of fiction'—that which he holds up to Elizabeth as the pattern of courtesy in the proem to his Legend—in order to remain faithful to what MacCaffrey has called "the brutal truncations of reality among the withered stumps of time."²⁴

²⁴ Isabel G. MacCaffrey. *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination*. (Princeton, 1976) 397.

GILLES DUVAL

STANDARDIZATION vs. GENRE:
CONDUCT-BOOKS AND ENGLISH CHAP-LITERATURE

My aim in this chapter is to show that popular courtesy-books are typical of popular literature in general, insofar as they are incredibly eclectic, which means that in order to understand them at all we must forgo all ready-made categories. As a matter of fact chap-literature of the 18th century borrowed largely from established genres, high and low alike. It shared this characteristic with its predecessors, namely the 'jig' and the popular courtesy-books of the seventeenth century. But this is only one aspect of the matter as, in so doing, chapbooks blurred the borders of established genres, not only through the sheer ignorance of the compilers but also because this tendency was deeply ingrained in their very nature.

Courtesy-books are particularly concerned with the way men should behave with women and they tell the reader a lot about love-making at that time. More generally they aim both at depicting social relations at large and at providing advice to socially aspiring individuals. At the same time they cannot be dissociated from a strong interest in astrology, physiognomy, etc. and the sheer delight of fiction reading. This means that epistemological differences are swept away and that the borders between reality and fiction all but vanish. Most important, this confirms how fruitful and (to us readers of the 20th century) how surprising cultural interchanges can be. Chap-literature was apt to adopt and adapt heterogeneous elements, turning them into new and original wholes. It underwent significant changes in form and content over time, and so it is important to keep the time element in mind. For instance the twin concepts of 'fact' and 'fiction', of 'delight' and 'instruction' are no longer what they were in the 18th century. Also, we need to realize that didactic literature might be enjoyed as such, or read in different ways by different people.

To take one well-documented example, it seems that the 'jig', and later the ballads and most of the courtesy books sold as chapbooks, were originally dialogue songs associated with dance in popular festivals. They were later transformed by professional actors into stage 'jigs' i.e. "an afterpiece in the form of a brief farce which was sung and accompanied by

dancing.”¹ It consisted of two main elements which are met in varying proportions throughout its history: the love motive and satire. There were wooing songs, pastourelles, songs of requited and unrequited love in the pastoral tradition, and songs of rejected lovers, as well as satires of brutally direct wooers and lascivious lovers, both men and women. All these themes, literary forms and characters are lumped up in varying degrees in 17th and 18th century conduct-books.

The stage jig also drew upon the tradition of folk pastoral festivals, which attracted considerable interest from cultured circles (Baskervill, p. 14). Indeed, the pastoral in the Virgilian tradition enjoyed a great prestige in the upper classes at that time. The popular ballad and the broadside ballad were derived from this cultural interchange; originally, the jig included both music and dance. It may be assumed, or at least imagined, that the jig with its different components (song, dance, drama) branched off towards dialogues or printed narratives no longer meant to be watched or listened to but simply to be read. Indeed, “after the Restoration, pastoral songs continued to be popular on the stage and in entertainments, and they were expanded or imitated in many broadsides, frequently with their play-house origin indicated” (p. 209). But one must guard against the misconception that popular literature is always biased in favour of simplification: rather, it tends to operate a constant reshuffling of traditions. Obviously, there can always be missing links, and Baskervill does not seem to have any overall theory to offer, but one thing at least is clear: the jig was at the hub of intense cultural interchange and, as often happens in such cases, its borders are far from clear-cut.

In jigs, the good and bad qualities of husbands and wives were dealt with in a number of dialogues and the domestic brawl was popular as drama among the folk (p. 174). To quote Baskervill again, “A majority of the dialogue ballads deal with the love motive, whether in romantic, comic, or bawdy vein” (p. 179). However:

The bent of the known stage jigs was so persistently toward the farcical and the droll that we may be sure the jig dealt with love less often romantically than in burlesque or vulgar fashion. The pert and scornful maiden and the clownish or the wanton wooer are stock figures in popular ballads. many of which are are pure dialogues well suited for performance as jigs (p. 189).

Comic chapbooks in the Pepys collection (for instance *A Merry Dialogue between Andrew and his Sweetheart Joan*, *A pleasant Dialogue betwixt Honest John and loving Kate*, *Simon and Cisley* and *The Womans Brawl*)

¹ Charles R. Baskervill. *The Elizabethan Jig and Related Song Drama*. [1928] (New York: Dover, 1965) 3.

are probably derived from them. I quote from *Andrew and Joan*:

IOAN. Who is there that keeps such a dinn below at this unseasonable time of the night ?

AND. Tis I Joan. Who are you ? your old sweetheart Andrew... Is it you, poor dear Andrew, I am coming running sweet Andrew... [the cues are mixed up here]

ION. But prithee tell me what makes you come at this time of night ?

AND. Truly Joan the cause of my coming is to finish our old Love that is between us, and to joyn in the way of matrimony, that is to mock a marriage together. This has been long talked of.

ION. Andrew but when will you be as big as your word ? [a bawdy allusion]

AND. Even when you will Joan; but first let's try if all things will agree when they meet [bawdy again].²

The theatrical bent can also sensed in the formal construction of the booklets, their layout; *Cupids Poesies*, for instance, can be considered as a play with a prologue and epilogue recited by the tutelary divinity of all lovers, Cupid himself. And proverbial wisdom and commonplaces on love are often given dramatic force in dialogue, as in this passage of *The Art of Courtship*³:

...Love is a jest which makes me covet solitude, and shun those recreations in which I was wont to glory; a jest made worse by what you tell; makes me do what I never did before, envy your happiness, since I am now most miserable.

The artificiality here is brought into relief by the use of rhetorical devices. There is a particularly complex mixture in this lyrical outburst of a contented lover, as poetry is introduced:

Now you revive me—
It shall be as you say, —this day shall be
The happy, joyful, nuptial day to me:
If you consent to be my charming bride
All cares I'll banish, and while, by my side
You panting lie, night shall thy blushes hide.
Night, the coverture of infant love,
Shall make you know how dearly I do love.

Some of these chapbooks (like *John and Kate*) passed on into in the 18th century as well. For this period, one can also make passing mention of *Hughson and Margery*, *The Shoemaker and his Wife* (classic brawls between a weak husband and his virago of a wife) and also *The Cupboard Door Open'd* which features an additional element, that of the conflict between master and apprentice.

² Pepys collection, Magdalen College, Cambridge.

³ Published in the 18th Century by Swindells; BL shelf-mark: 12330 cc 42.

These chapbooks are extremely composite. They cater for a multiplicity of needs and tastes: they offer substitutes to playgoing while providing advice on key decisions. Readers must have gone to them for pure enjoyment, help and a feeling of superiority over shrews and country bumpkins, either in turns or at the same time. Earnestness being only a step away from ludicrousness, readers are supposed to identify with some couples, but also to judge others, which opens up innumerable possibilities of comedy if not of caricature.

Writers-cum-publishers-cum-booksellers were perforce men of all trades in the fullest sense of the phrase. They explained how one should face up to a whole range of situations, how one should prepare for them; they also provided examples to be followed or rejected. They even went so far as to throw in disquisitions on love and its effects, all for one penny. In modern parlance one would say that they offered good value for money. That being granted, it appears that directions on how to cut roast do belong here. It is no wonder that they are a staple, if I may say so, of courtesy-books over the period considered. The different entries and subparts are called upon to make up a homogeneous whole: all advice is concerned with "the right behaviour with the right people, all in one's best interest."

In popular courtesy-books action and abstraction become intertwined, as can be seen in this subheading: 'The different Effects of LOVE; or, a A discourse between Will and Ned' (from *Art of Courtship*). Probably neither the printer nor his readers felt there was any discrepancy in this, that it was mutually exclusive.

Another aspect of the eclecticism of these conduct-books is that much of their content is derived from the tradition of the emblem, which reached the height of its popularity and complexity in the Renaissance. The graphic and poetic components have become dissociated, the poetic element only being preserved. Of course much of this discourse is formulaic in essence; chap literature is undoubtedly a hotbed of stereotype, but it also relies on a common ground of lived experience and beliefs. It is particularly easy for us to ridicule references to the occult sciences, but it must be realized that they are generally made in earnest, as for instance when Black has a character say to the other: "Venus was kind in ruling your Nativity." To us, the comfort in this sentence may sound maudlin, if not beside the point, but it should probably be taken literally. Indeed, love is supposed to be ruled by the planets, so it is only natural that utterances on love, magic and the planets should overlap.

At the same time these books depict real behaviour, and sexual roles are clearly delineated. They are not allowed to slip from the reader's mind. I will not expatiate on that, but for example, the man's love letter is in verse while the woman's answer is in prose to underline the necessity of coolness

and prudence on her part. She must at least make a show of indifference and she is supposed merely to respond to the man's advances. Sexual differences in behaviour and strategy are strongly marked in other aspects of courtship books. For instance, men are the sole users of 'loves posies' (short compliments in verse)⁴. There were also and mottoes to be engraved in rings or embroidered on scarfs ("If you consent I am content"). Indeed, the man is supposed to be always in command, the woman's role being restricted to acceptance or refusal. A few examples will suffice here:

Complimental Expressions to be used by young Men to their Mistresses:

— Ah! Madam, look upon the man that adores, and let him not fall a sacrifice to your disdain.

— O my love, did you consider my constancy you would not be cruel.

Typically enough, the man's lines come before the woman's in the typographical layout of the book itself:

Complimental Expressions for young Women:

— Sir, your compliments are past my understanding.

— Sir, I misunderstand you, I beg pardon for the dulness of my apprehension.⁵

Sexual differentiation can further be sensed in the fact that astrology, physiognomy and magic in general seem to be the preserve of women. It can help them make crucial decisions, and they are assumed to be more superstitious anyway. As a matter of fact, there is method in this apparent madness, as astrology is supposed to enable the (female) reader to select suitable parties or to see them in their dreams; the rest of the book provides them with recipes on how to win the heart of the man they have chosen.

Admittedly, piracy was rife at that time but convenience or negligence are not enough to explain the re-use and transformation of material. Indeed, in the 18th century practical guides and collections of proverbs and quotations from classic authors were not felt to be different in kind. They were supposed to serve the same ends, except that some dealt in general principles expressed abstractly, while others resorted to dramatization and specific situations to convey more precise and down-to-earth advice. So it only seemed natural to lift passages from a medley of chapbooks and blow them into works in their own right. Most probably *Nimble and Quick*, *Rules and Maxims*, *The Rule of Life* were so composed. Their sources are easy enough to spot: the substance of these anthologies comes from Greek philosophers or contemporary essayists. But I need not expand on that, as the origins are less interesting than the contents. For example, in the composite chapbook

⁴ An example of a ludicrous one among many: "My love is true which IOU/ Is true to me then CUB" (*Cupids Posies*. (London, 1674); BL shelf-mark: c. 39 a 30).

⁵ *The Academy of Compliments*. Published by C. Sympson; BL shelf-mark: 1076 1 3.

*The Art of Courtship*⁶, the reader is offered dialogue but also a series of maxims, such as: "A politician must, like lightning, melt the marrow, but not pierce the skin," which has no nothing to do with love; and, farther on: "Too much indulgence is no love, but hate," which applies better to children or servants than to a wife. All this means that different elements can be used to the same purpose and that one and the same element can be put to different uses. Practical advice is not restricted to courtesy books and, conversely, narratives can be used in many different ways.

Indeed, love letters in 'pure' narratives are given a markedly prescriptive turn. In these texts there is no attempt at characterization through language or even at the framing of a vicarious experience; in fact, love letters serve to depict people in their social setting in idealized terms. Awareness of historical change and interest in psychology are all but null here, which is not too surprising as the purely social element is foremost in the minds of both authors and readers. These texts rest on the idea that princes have different problems from those of the common run of people, and that, at any rate, they cope with them in a highly specific and predictable way. I quote now from the opening lines of *Guy of Warwick*, a chapbook which provided a model for many later stories:

...Sir Guy, Warwick's mirror, and all the world's wonder, was the chief hero of the age; whose process (*sic*) so surpassed all his predecessors, that the trump of fame loudly sounded Warwick's praise, that Jews, Turks. and Infidels became acquainted with his name.

But as Mars the God of Battle was inspired with the beauty of Venus, so our Guy, by no means conquered, was conquered by love; for Phillis the fair, whose beauty and virtue were inestimable, shining with such heavenly lustre, that Guy's poor heart was ravished in adoration of this heavenly Phillis, whose beauty was so excellent (*sic*), that Helen, the pride of all Greece, might seem as a Black-a-Moor to her.

Let me note incidentally that even the woodcuts of this highly popular chapbook were inserted into other stories. Later on, the love-sick Guy says to his doctor:

I know my body is distempered; but you want skill to cure the inward inflammation of my heart; Galen's herbal cannot quote the flower I like for my remedy: I know my own disease, Doctor, and am obliged to you.

The doctor departed, and left Guy to cast his eyes on the heavenly face of his Phillis, as she was walking in a garden full of roses and other flowers.⁷

Compare with this passage from *Bateman*, a story first published in the 17th century:

⁶ Swindells, BL shelf mark: 11330 cc 42

⁷ Dicey version, c.1760; BL: shelf-mark 1079 i 13-15.

... [he saw a young lady] at the door of a fine seemly house, with whose innocent and comely features he was on a sudden so taken in that he could not but make a full stop to gaze at her.

The maid no sooner perceived his eyes fixed on her, than colouring her cheeks with a rosy blush, she modestly retired, no less surprised with his personage, this being the first time they had seen each other; he had not the courage to make any advances, but went on to a town about fifteen miles beyond that, but, in a manner without, for he left that with his fair mistress.

All the way he rode, his thoughts were strangely confused, so that he laboured to compose them, but in vain. —He found now, though he had formerly made a jest of love and laughed at his companions for declaring their passions, that he was taken in, who had so often persuaded others of their folly; but now he found the more he struggled, the more he was entangled. The business he went on was not minded, yet he cunningly concealed the case from them; but finding the contagion had seized his mind more than his body, they concluded it was from the decay of his fortune; and that he might not be dejected, they proffered him their assistance in any thing he would command them.⁸

There ensues an exchange of letters very similar in tone and content to those one encounters in courtesy-books, and this too throws into relief the striking resemblances between the two texts: indeed, the social transposition entails very little change at any level whatsoever. Yet, I would put in a caveat here as there is no *Urtext*; these stories simply belong to the same mental universe. One of the outstanding characteristics of chap-literature is its ability first to choose from and homogenize existing matter and then to create new material along established, well-proven lines. This kind of dialogue, as well an exchange of letters, is a constant feature of love stories. It would be easy to give examples taken from medieval romances, mythological stories or stories with a contemporary setting (*Bateman*), which read as if they were mere transpositions of earlier texts. Their narrative role is obvious: they break down the rhythm of the story while they help it along in their own way by creating suspense. But dialogues and letters serve other purposes: they depict an idealized social setting and they provide examples to be followed. Their elements are always the same: for example, it is to be noted that the lovers often meet in a garden or an arbour (*Guy*, *The Black Prince*, *Bateman*): one meets repeatedly with such commonplaces as love-sickness and its effects, and recurring situations such as the social inequality between the lovers, the maid's rejection of the hero, and her giving herself away to conniving friends (Lucinda, Hero). Style and feelings are also standardized though stories with aristocratic heroes seem to be more addicted to overblown rhetoric.

⁸ *Ibid.*

At this point, two aspects of chap-literature need to be highlighted, and I return to a point I made at the beginning of this chapter: first, authors and compilers seem to be baffled by the characteristics of the genres they borrow from. They tend to blur borders unconsciously because they lack the necessary literary background, and they are not really aware of what they are doing. Second—and this is in fact a corollary of a basic principle underlined by Michel de Certeau, Fiske, Chartier, Burke and others—while it shows original features, popular culture is also characterized, among other things, by a strong bent towards the re-use, adaptation and deformation of cultured forms. It is capable of turning inside out material aimed at its reformation and of transforming it beyond recognition. Last, chap-literature is first and foremost a commercial venture, and printers do their best to satisfy their customers' desires. Basically they tend to pack as many different things as possible, as cheaply as possible, into every single chapbook. That is why comedy, adventure, exotic plots and satire can be found alongside practical advice and prophecies.

These mixtures are highly volatile and unpredictable, but of course one particular aspect is liable to get the upper hand: *John and Kate* is comedy and practical advice, as well a documentary. Magic books and treatises on the interpretation of moles and dreams are concerned with everyday life and individual happiness in general—married life and the choice of 'Mr. Right' being only one of its elements. They depict chronological stages but they also provide answers to problems that may occur in different social contexts in one given period. So it is no surprise that Baskervill should have found it so difficult to give a simple, hard and fast definition of the jig; as a matter of fact, no such thing can be done. The same holds for the literature of conduct and, indeed, it would only be a slight exaggeration to say that it is everywhere and nowhere. At any rate, modern taxonomy may not be helpful in describing texts which were different things to different readers.

In conclusion I would argue that these texts are timely reminders that the definitions of courtesy evolve over time, and there is probably no such thing as 'pure' fiction, nor has there ever been. To be more precise, advice on how to behave is to be found not only courtesy-books proper, but also in many other kinds of books; conversely, courtesy-books are concerned with a whole range of preoccupations. The most surprising thing to us, readers of the 20th century, is that in the period considered authors and compilers were unashamedly didactic, all the more so as readers relished didacticism. Second, we see that the same elements are constantly re-used. The clusters vary in tone and content according to the aim of the book. If the author wants to delight first and foremost he will tend to offer a dramatic piece or put together a jumble of *Delights for Young Men and Maids* (a chapbook title), which can also be used as aids to the more serious game of courtship.

For its part, the courtesy-book proper is supposed to help one achieve individual happiness, in marriage and social relations with one's equals or betters, whereas books of maxims are more philosophical in content; they offer consolation and moral advice, thus paving the way for the highest human achievements. Chapbooks are not original in the main but they probably served their purpose well.

PETER WAGNET.

HOGARTH'S *INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS*:
SUBVERSIVE LESSONS ON CONDUCT

In this chapter I try to provide a close reading as it were of the verbal discourse in print (and especially of 'popular writings') as represented and hence already interpreted, in Hogarth's pictorial series *Industry and Idleness* published in 1747. My interest is in the ways the artist handles various forms and genres of reading matter vis-à-vis the heroes, i.e., how he associates the two apprentices with the written discourse of his day and age. Like other commentators on what at first glance seems to be a moral lesson in pictures on how to become rich and famous, I believe that the series displays an ambiguity that eventually subverts the obvious didactic message. I locate this ambiguity less in authorial intention, although such intention was doubtless at work, or realistic reportorial details, but rather in the highly intermedial nature of the Hogarthian prints which, as iconographic 'texts' refer to and integrate other discourses to such an extent that they 'impose a universe' on Hogarth's graphic art.¹ What Julia Kristeva has said about a 'poetic utterance' is also true for Hogarth's series in which 'can be read numerous other discourses,' although they are frequently hidden and hard to find.²

The two major interpretations of the series have been established by Paulson and Shesgreen. Ronald Paulson believes that Hogarth intentionally undermines the didactic dimension and that the ambiguity results from his catering to different audiences. "It was purchased by masters, Paulson argues, and hung for the edification of their apprentices; but it was also aimed at those 'readers of greater penetration' he had addressed from *Boys Peeping at Nature* onward." In Paulson's opinion Hogarth adds a third audience, the apprentices (or the journeymen) who will read a different message from their masters, though a closely similar one to the 'readers of greater penetration.' The master who bought *Industry and Idleness* read it as a moral exemplum, while the apprentice automatically sided with Tom Idle against the more successful and respectable Goodchild, representing the

¹ The phrase is Julia Kristeva's in her *La révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1974) 388-89, where she argues that "every [poetic] text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it."

² Julia Kristeva. *Semiotikè* (Paris: Seuil, 1969): 225.

master ethos.³ Shesgreen's explanation for the ambiguity of *Industry and Idleness* is that although Hogarth intends to convey a moral meaning, the historical details he provides as an accurate observer of everyday life threaten to subvert the moral exemplum.⁴ Focussing on Hogarth's intermedial use of 'literature' (in the widest sense of the word), I want to suggest that the intertextual nature of the series, its juxtaposition of occasionally contradictory 'texts,' creates a tension between the various forms of discourse that calls into question the overt moral meaning or reading.

In fact, Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* is the perfect example of a highly sophisticated and intricate palimpsest inviting the reader to identify and connect what Genette has termed architexts, paratexts, and epitexts.⁵ Concentrating on merely one form of these 'texts' (those represented visually), I shall not be able to comment on other important aspects of the iconography of the prints: e.g., I shall say next to nothing on emblems and art history (Hogarth drawing on Rembrandt, Breughel et al.); I shall remain silent on the influence of élite (bourgeois) literature on this series; and I shall also leave aside much of the contemporary background which has been explored by other critics.⁶

However, before discussing the functions of the texts that appear visually in the engravings of *Industry and Idleness* I should like to point out the sources or models inspiring Hogarth in this case.⁷ The general frame of the series, twelve plates telling a story, is derived from the popular continental print cycles. The biblical passages we see inscribed below the prints (a text that is both architext and paratext, and as such needs further attention) were apparently chosen for Hogarth by his friend the Reverend Arnold King. Paulson has noticed that the scriptural quotations are mostly from *Proverbs* and *Leviticus*, underlining the stark pattern of contrast and causality.⁸ The literary sources with an impact on the series, either conceptually or thematically, include the comedy *Eastward Hoe*, by Chapman, Marston, and Jonson, which had been republished in Dodsley's *Old Plays* (1744); George Lillo's domestic tragedy, *The London Merchant; or, the History of George*

³ Ronald Paulson. *Hogarth's Graphic Works*. 3rd revised edition (London: The Print Room, 1989) 130, hereafter cited as HGW. For further analyses and interpretations along these lines see Paulson. "The Simplicity of Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness*." *ELH* 41 (1974) 1-30; *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge UP, 1975) 58-78; and *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1979) 9-23.

⁴ Sean Shesgreen. "Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness*: A Reading." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9 (1976) 569-98.

⁵ For a discussion of these terms see Genette's *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*. (Paris: Seuil, 1982); and *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

⁶ See Paulson's commentary in HGW: 130-139; and Shesgreen's article quoted above.

⁷ For a more detailed discussion see Paulson, HGW: 129-130.

⁸ HGW: 129.

Barnwell (1731); and Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743). Equally important, though often neglected by critics, are the various forms of street literature which are among the major texts I want to discuss here.

In the first picture of *Industry and Idleness* (cf. plate I in this volume), entitled '*The Fellow 'Prentices at their Looms*', Hogarth makes a number of intermedial references to some manifestations of what Bakhtin has termed the 'culture of the marketplace and folk laughter.'⁹ Contrasting the behavioural patterns of the two eponymous apprentices Tom Idle and Francis Goodchild, Hogarth associates them with ballads. One should not be misled by the marginal iconographic role of these texts, for in Hogarth's graphic art the periphery often comments on the centre, especially in his later works where the marginal tends to undermine the central scenes.¹⁰ In this case, the ballads actually characterize the antagonists and, for those who are acquainted with the texts, foretell the 'prentices' future. The different characters of the two young men are also revealed by the ways they have been treating their copies of *The 'Prentices Guide*,' probably a version of Samuel Richardson's *Apprentice's Vade Mecum*, published in 1734, which like other guides of this kind virtually outlined the scenario of *Industry and Idleness*. When Richardson concluded in his book, "I wish [...] the ingenious Mr. Hogarth would finish the Portrait," he did not know that thirteen years later William Hogarth would comply with his wish, although in a highly ambiguous manner which the author of *Pamela* probably disliked.¹¹ Hogarth thus plays with Richardson's book in several intertextual and intermedial ways that demonstrate how a text (Hogarth's print) works by "absorbing and destroying at the same time the other texts of the intertextual space."¹² To begin with, he integrates a conduct book into his own series on conduct, appropriating both a genre and an extremely moralistic text in order to put them to new, partly ironic, use within the iconography of his picture. The two copies of Richardson's treatise, once we relate them to their owners or users, establish further relations between the texts and their readers as depicted in the engraving. We notice, for instance, that from the beginning Francis Goodchild respects the printed word (and hence the written laws of society); his copy of the Guide is in mint condition. Tom Idle, however, prefers beer and tobacco, ignoring everything in print, including his copy of Richardson's book which lies mouldering at

⁹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin. *Rabelais and his World*. Transl. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968) 4-6.

¹⁰ See, for instance, plate 4 of *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1745), where, on the left, Punch appears on a screen; the literally marginal figures (Sancho and the Samaritan Woman) in plate 2 of *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753); and the Turk at the window in *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism* (1762).

¹¹ HGW 130.

¹² Julia Kristeva. *Semiotikè*: 257.

his feet. In the very first picture, then, Hogarth tells us to pay attention both to the manner in which the 'prentices treat texts and to the subtle ways in which he relates texts and characters.

Even more interesting is Hogarth's intermedial integration of popular street literature, i.e., the 'prentices' reading matter. On the wall behind Goodchild we can see two ballads, entitled 'Whittington Ld Mayor' and 'The London Prentice,' the latter headed by a woodcut probably showing Daniel defending himself against the lions. Both are ballads of success predicting the bright future of an industrious and pious apprentice who, like the legendary Dick Whittington, will become Lord Mayor of London. The fact that the cat, not Whittington himself, was the active hero of the ballad (a version of the popular fairy tale, *Puss in Boots*) and that Whittington's achievement merely consisted in taking opportunity by the forelock (as indicated in the fourth picture of the series) is one of the many subversive signifiers Hogarth has included in his ostensibly moral lesson on good apprenticeship. Readers who were familiar with the ballads would immediately recognize Hogarth's subversive play with the popular verbal subtext of this print in that Whittington's cat tries in vain to alert the idle 'prentice.¹³ Tom Idle, whose face incidentally resembles Hogarth's own 'doggyish' profile, is the lazy, defiant weaver's apprentice who angers his master by neglecting his work at the loom and reading a ballad version not of a successful man but of a criminal woman, Moll Flanders. It is important that Hogarth shows us Tom Idle beside a ballad based on Defoe's best-seller, and not the novel itself which in its book form would have been too expensive for an apprentice. In fact, Tom is the owner of one of the affordable editions of *Moll Flanders* published in the form of ballads and chapbooks, which differed substantially from the original.¹⁴ It is hardly accidental that in all of Hogarth's engravings, one never encounters a single English novel of the eighteenth century—people are being shown reading (or deliberately ignoring) a great variety of texts, but never any novels.¹⁵

By contrast, ballads and ballad singers figure prominently and frequently

¹³ See Paulson. *Emblem and Expression*: 64; and his commentary on the print in HGW: n° 168. On Richard Whittington (d. 1423), a historical person and mayor of London who became the generator of popular ballads, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. 'Whittington.'

¹⁴ On the chapbook versions of Moll Flanders see Pat Rogers. "Classics and Chapbooks" and "Moll in the Chapbooks." *Literature and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1985) 62-82; 183-98. For a discussion of the difference between the novel and the chapbook versions of *Moll Flanders* see Maximilian Novak. *Realism, Myth, and History in Defoe's Fiction*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 71-75.

¹⁵ See Ian Watt who, in his influential study *The Rise of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963) conceded that the novel "was not ... a popular literary form" (p. 46).

in Hogarth's oeuvre, confirming the observations of eighteenth-century commentators on the importance throughout the period and the gradual disappearance, around 1800, of songs, ballads, and jokes in the streets and public places of London.¹⁶ Hogarth's ballad singers and mongers usually appear in crowd scenes representing London's low life. They are mostly pregnant or single women, apparently abandoned by their spouses, or cripples; and together with their popular wares they represent part of the rituals and countertheatre performed by eighteenth-century crowds.¹⁷ To return to Tom Idle's ballad of Moll Flanders, however, one can assume that it probably had a moral example to offer for Tom; but like several other common people in Hogarth's works who show great disrespect for the written word, he ignores both the text and the myth it propagates. That text, the story of Moll Flanders, also foreshadows his own life, for like Defoe's heroine Tom will turn into a criminal and later die penitent. In depicting the 'prentices' reading matter Hogarth appeals to what Roland Barthes termed the '*déjà lu*,'¹⁸ i.e., to presuppositions of an intersubjective prior body of discourse containing codes that contribute to the signifying practices of the engravings.¹⁹

In the second picture, '*The Industrious 'Prentice Performing the Duty of a Christian*,' Hogarthian irony is at work on several levels (plate II). It begins with the interaction of title and image (the ambiguity of the words 'performing' and 'duty' drawing our attention to Francis Goodchild's hypocritical behaviour) and ends with that of motto and image which, as Paulson has noted, raises the question, settled later in the series (pl. VIII), of whether 'love' and 'thy Law' of the epigraph refer to God or to the master's daughter, the real object and target of Francis' attention and devotion.²⁰ The theme of idolatry (a female body displacing God or religion) inspires most of Hogarth's church scenes.²¹ It is also quite obvious in this plate where the intertextual aspects support the central issue, the misuse of devotion and devotional writings for selfish purposes. We see that a psalm is being sung

¹⁶ See, for instance, Francis Place's comments on the songs and ballads he heard during his youth: Place Ms in the British Library (shelfmark Add. MSS 27825, fol. 141-164).

¹⁷ See, for instance *The Enraged Musician* (1741) and the tavern scene of *The Rake's Progress* (1735).

¹⁸ Roland Barthes. *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970) 16.

¹⁹ On the author's appeal to the reader's knowledge of genres and prior texts see Jonathan Culler. "Presupposition and Intertextuality." *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 100-118, especially pp. 101-103.

²⁰ HGW: 134.

²¹ See my discussion of *The Sleeping Congregation* (1736) and of *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism* (1762) in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 21 (1991), *Word & Image* 7:3 (1991), and *L'Érotisme en Angleterre: réalités et représentations*. Ed. Jean-François Gournay (Lille: Presses de l'université Charles de Gaulle, 1991).

during divine service. The industrious 'prentice seems to be interested mainly in the text of the hymnal. However, the hymnal, like the Bible in other engravings, constitutes a practical means for him to be close to, and later to marry, his master's daughter. In other words, the collection of texts (the hymnal) Hogarth depicts is merely a pre-text for Francis Goodchild while he strategically pursues his way to the top.²²

With the third picture we return once again to the fascinating if tragic career of Tom Idle who, as the title tells us, is "at Play in the Church Yard" (plate III). While there is no printed text in this picture it is interesting and, in the context of Hogarth's intermedial use of writings, important to notice how Tom is related and reacts to written language. We notice that Tom's body actually covers a text of sorts, the inscription on the tombstone, thus obliterating a useful moral, such as 'Memento mori,' while creating a new text, 'Here ...Body ...ob,' which, given Tom's posture, is a pun.²³ Tom Idle, the antitextual hero of the series, is thus shown to be defiant of the written word, an attitude that allows him, on the one hand, to escape the snares of middle-class society but, on the other hand, also leads to tragic consequences.

The fourth picture, '*The Industrious 'Prentice a Favourite and Entrusted by His Master,*' provides a glimpse of the sober world of the weavers and merchants (pl. IV). There is little room for art and literature in this walk of life. Goodchild, almost in control of the business, and his master are here associated with money and with 'useful' things, such as day books and almanacks. On the side of the desk we see the London Almanack with a picture showing Youth or Industry seizing Time by the forelock. This resumes the theme of one of the broadsides in the first plate while telling us that Francis Goodchild has certainly learnt his lesson. As in other pictures where Hogarth characterizes merchants, there is a remarkable absence of anything that might be termed artistic or literary. The only books these people are shown to be reading are ledgers and 'Day Books.'²⁴

Tom Idle's contempt of words in print emerges again as a theme when he is 'Turned Away and Sent to Sea' because of his misconduct (pl. V). The paper he has dropped into the water is his indenture, a legal contract that normally bound an apprentice to remain with his master for seven years. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the larger European cities

²² See also Hogarth's implicit critique of the misuse of the Bible in plate 1 of *The Rake's Progress* and in plate 10 of *Industry and Idleness*. For a detailed discussion of the function of the Bible in Hogarth's satirical prints see my article in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (forthcoming).

²³ See HGW: 131 and 137.

²⁴ See also the interior of the merchant's house in the final plate of *Marriage-à-la Mode* (1745) where the same books indicate the owner's preoccupation with money and money-making and his lack of interest in the fine arts.

saw frequent riots by indentured servants who resented the social and personal consequences of having their daily lives organized and supervised by occasionally callous masters. In fact, apprenticeship in the early eighteenth century came close to slavery.²⁵ In Hogarth's print the floating indenture signifies the failed attempt on the part of society to capture and domesticate the independent Tom. By defying the printed contract Tom Idle, for the time being at least, dodges financial and social dependence. That this is only a temporary victory is underlined by two figures in the boat who already indicate the punishment that expects him on the road he has now chosen: the dangling rope held by the boy suggests the idea of a noose (hanging) or a cat-o-nine-tails used for whipping sailors, and the waterman literally points to Tom's sad death at the gallows.

Several texts establish the intermedial iconography of the sixth picture, *'The Industrious 'Prentice out of his Time and Married to his Master's Daughter.'* (pl. VI) Unlike Tom Idle, Francis Goodchild has gone through his apprenticeship. His reward is the partnership in the business of his master... and the master's daughter. The shop sign of the firm, one of the texts we must pay attention to, reads 'West and Goodchild.' In an earlier state of the print the junior partner even usurped the senior's place, the sign reading 'Goodchild and West.' These may well have been alternative versions, then, given to different buyers (masters and servants), a manner of catering and selling to two audiences which Hogarth also practiced with later engravings.²⁶

However, the most interesting text in this picture is the one entitled 'Jesse or the Happy Pair.' This 'new song' is a sort of wedding present presented by a legless beggar, Philip-in-the-Tub, a rather well-known figure of the day who usually appeared at weddings. Apparently, there was no ballad with such a title, but Hogarth chose the title with care, for 'the Happy Pair' applies to two pairs, Goodchild and his wife as well as the apprentice and his master. The name Jesse (which in Hebrew means wealthy) recalls two biblical figures, Jesse and his son David, who may be related to Hogarth's characters in divergent ways. An eighteenth-century master (and Goodchild is soon to be one) would have seen the Tree of Jesse and its outcome, Jesus. "Readers of greater penetration" (as the *Spectator* called them) as well as apprentices, however, might have recognized a more cynical message, namely that Goodchild's wife is really the master's reward

²⁵ On the life of apprentices and their frequent riots London see Sean Shesgreen. "Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness*: a Reading" 582-85, 590-92. On similar events in Paris, see Robert Darnton. "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre in the Rue Saint-Séverin." *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 79-105.

²⁶ HGW: 133.

for lawful service which for many apprentices and for Hogarth himself amounted to humiliating bondage.²⁷

In the next picture, which takes us back into the criminal life of Tom Idle now 'Returned from Sea and in a Garret with a Common Prostitute,' we find no traces of written texts (pl. VII). Yet the scene as such is a good example of visual allusions to the viewer's or reader's knowledge of plots and characters from crime literature. Hogarth, in other words, plays with the '*déjà lu*' of an immensely popular genre or, to change from the terminology of Barthes to that of Genette, with architexts that were as familiar to eighteenth-century readers as the Hollywood TV series are to postmodern viewers. Reminding the reader/observer of his/her knowledge of street literature concerned with criminals such as Moll Flanders, both plate 7 and 9 of *Industry and Idleness* demonstrate the extent to which Hogarth relied on the popular literature of his day and age, including the stereotypes and clichés which he needed to abbreviate and intensify his story. Plates 7 and 9 also show that Hogarth's graphic art, more than any poetic text, works with what Jonathan Culler has termed 'presupposition.' A powerful intertextual operator, this reliance on the reader's familiarity with prior discourse "relates the story to a series of other stories, identifies it with the conventions of a genre, [and] asks us to take certain attitudes towards it."²⁸

In the eighth picture both the wooden bar and the petition at the right block the passage between the poor, kept outside the building (either the banqueting hall in the Guildhall or the hall of the Fishmongers' Company), and the affluent, celebrating inside (pl. VIII). Francis Goodchild has 'Grown Rich' and become 'Sheriff of London.' It is not clear whether the petition held up by the beadle at the door will ever reach him. One could say that this form of discourse, invented by the rich (who are able to read and write) but used by the poor (who do not master the written language) sustains social differences instead of serving its intended purpose. Once more, irony is at work in Hogarth's integration of printed matter which is again being misused.

Hogarth's most sarcastic comment on the misuse of the written word is contained in the tenth picture of this series (pl. X). The sacrilegious abuse of the Bible we are allowed to witness here is, however, merely the analogy to a concomitant criminal misuse in the private sphere which Hogarth

²⁷ HGW: 133. Much against his own will, Hogarth was at an early age (because of his father's financial problems) apprenticed to a silversmith. On his mixed feelings about this time see his remarks in *The Analysis of Beauty* ed. Joseph Burke (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1955) 201 - 205.

²⁸ Culler. *The Pursuit of Signs*: 115. For a detailed discussion of the notion of 'presupposition' see pp. 110-118.

criticizes in several other prints.²⁹ In plate 10, the Bible becomes a criminal tool in the hands of ostensibly honest citizens. In this court of justice, Tom's former associate (the one-eyed man) has turned 'King's Evidence' on the idle 'prentice. Swearing to the truth of his deposition, he uses his left hand instead of his right which—technically speaking—makes the oath not binding on the swearer. With a brilliant oblique technique that subverts the surface meaning of the series, Hogarth makes sure that the details of this picture put into question the moral right of the judges and their attendants to judge. Goodchild, as justice, is as blind as the allegorical figure he parodies. Hogarth's point is that Goodchild is also literally blind for he does not see both the bribing of the clerk and the clerk's illegal toleration of what, from an objective point of view, is perjury and hence a criminal act. The good citizens, then, act like the crooks before them, and the artist implicitly raises the question of guilt, asking the observer to decide what is more criminal, the obvious foul deed of Tom Idle or the devious behaviour of his judges who employ the Holy Writ, the sacred word of God, for an equally wicked act.

The execution scene of the idle 'prentice (pl. XI) constitutes Hogarth's radical if oblique critique of middle-class religion. Again, the Bible is shown to be abused, for in this scene Tom Idle has fallen prey to an 'enthusiast,' a Methodist preacher. The idle 'prentice has at long last become a reader. In the open cart conducting the condemned man to the gallows we see him intently reading the Holy Writ. However, Hogarth's sarcastic point is that this reading, conducted in the presence of a Methodist (Hogarth, in tune with Fielding and other writers, considered Methodists to be dangerous religious madmen), comes too late and is useless anyway. Just as God is absent in this situation when he is most needed, so is his mediator, the Ordinary of Newgate who symbolizes the Anglican Church. Ignoring the needs of Tom Idle, the representative of the Church of England, who should be reading the Bible in Tom's cart, rides ahead in his closed coach placed in the centre of the picture. The Church and society thus deliver Tom Idle into the hands of a fanatic Methodist preacher. We know what Hogarth thought of Methodism (see, for instance, the most aggressive critique that inspires the iconography of his *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism*, 1762), and in this print he conveys his dislike of 'religious enthusiasm' again by including a man who is about to hurl a dog (held by its tail) at the preacher in the cart.

However, the Bible is just one of several texts Hogarth has integrated into this scene. In fact, Tom Idle has not only become a reader, he also acts

²⁹ See, for instance, plate 1 of *The Rake's Progress*, where the rake cuts the sole of his shoe out of the leather binding of his Bible; and *The Polling* (1758) in which perjury is committed with the help of the Bible.

as a generator of texts, notably of crime literature. There is an interesting triangle in this picture which relates generators and vendors of texts, from the Ordinary of Newgate (the author), cut off from the crowd in his coach, to the woman in the foreground (a sort of medium) peddling a crime report, and Tom (the hero or subject) in his cart. The Ordinary of Newgate actually was an author. From his pen came the sensational and prurient pamphlets entitled *The Ordinary of Newgate: His Account of the Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words of the Malefactors Who Were Executed at Tyburn*. These crime reports were competing with other popular dying speeches and confessions of criminals that were printed, sometimes even before the execution of the 'heroes,' and hawked in the streets of London.³⁰ In plate XI of *Industry and Idleness* we see how this crime literature was being hawked. The woman in the centre cries 'The Last Dying Speech & Confession of Tho. Idle.' But Hogarth suggests that this mythification and appropriation of Tom's story by society is being ignored by the subculture. He shows what executions really were for the lower class, i.e., public events resembling fairs and containing parodies and travesties of high culture, such as the ritual of the Lord Mayor's Procession depicted in the last scene of the series. The behaviour of the unruly crowd indicates that Tom's fate does not serve as a moral example for the plebeians. Among many other subversive details, the boy picking the cake-seller's pocket on the right tells us that the story of the good and bad apprentices is about to begin again. There is additional irony in the fact that this man, who was nicknamed Tiddy Doll, also sang popular ballads. He might, in fact, be singing the sad story of Tom's criminal deeds (another verbal comment, and as such a 'text,' on Tom's life) which his thieving apprentice, the new Tom Idle, does not listen to because he is about to take the first step in his own criminal career.³¹ Hogarth's realistic and emblematic rendering of the drunken and uninhibited crowds in this picture as well as in the final plate suggests that the people at Tyburn and at the Lord Mayor's Procession do not really care about the roads to hell and heaven. They are motivated by their own animal drives and use the rituals as carnivalesque occasions.

The final plates of *Industry and Idleness* provide an excellent example of the way Hogarth deconstructs crime literature. He attributes to it an important new function in his narrative art while asking the reader to recall

³⁰ On the development of this genre of crime literature, which even developed a pornographic branch, see Peter Linebaugh, "The Ordinary of Newgate and His Account." *Crime in England, 1550-1800* ed. J. S. Cockburn (London: Methuen, 1977) 246-269; 348-352; and my article "The Pornographer in the Court Room. Trial Reports as a Genre of Eighteenth-Century Erotica." *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982) 120-141.

³¹ On Tiddy Doll, alias Ford, see HGW: 136.5

the traditional 'message' of such writings which was itself ambiguous because it catered to prurient appetites while pretending to offer a moral exemplum. Paulson and other commentators have repeatedly mentioned the 'cartoon aspect' of Hogarth's series, that one should read and decipher them from left to right.³² Throughout the series Idle appears on the left, 'bad,' side of the prints, and the eponymous Goodchild always on the right, 'good,' side of the pictures. This set-up changes in the last two plates. In plate XI, Tom Idle is still on the left, although his 'myth' (as recorded in his final speech which is being hawked) has already arrived at the centre of the picture. David Kunzle has argued that "the composition centers upon the ballad-seller crying Idle's 'Last Dying Speech.' She closes the narrative as it were in the role of chorus. This is fitting, for while the body of Idle is doomed, his spirit will live on in ballad and broadsheet."³³

The final plate radically reverses the iconography of the traditional moral print and picture series (pl. XII). Virtually locked up in his Mayor's coach like a prisoner in his cell, Francis Goodchild has now moved to the left (the 'bad' side); his alter ego is not present physically, but the verbal myth about Tom Idle seems to be as important as the Lord Mayor's Procession. A boy on the right eagerly reads, and may also be hawking, a pamphlet entitled 'A Full and True Account of ye Ghost of Tho: Idle,' a title Hogarth may have chosen because it ironically comments on the veracity of the text and the genre (ghost stories related to crime literature) it represents. Finally, then, even the death of the idle 'prentice has been exploited. He has become a mythical figure in a process that cost him his life and his true identity—that of the defiant outcast from the subculture. This is the final instance of Hogarth's use of popular literature within the context of his subversive iconographic strategy.

It would be convenient to be able to sum up the 'function(s)' of visually represented discourse in this series. But such an attempt entails the danger of narrowing the sophisticated concepts Hogarth works with—intermediality and intertextuality—so as to make them more usable. We should be prepared to accept the difficulties as well as the indeterminacy an intertextual approach creates. Intertextuality, which is so striking in Hogarth's graphic art, does provide rich insights into the contradictory nature of discursive systems, yet it remains a complicated tool to use because of the vast and undefined discursive spaces it designates. Jonathan Culler has pointed out the paradox that "theories of intertextuality set before us perspectives of

³² See Paulson. *Emblem and Expression*: 65-67; David Kunzle. *The Early Comic Strip. Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 298-340; and Frédéric Ogée. "L'oeil erre: les parcours sériels de Hogarth." *Tropismes* 5 (1991) 39-105.

³³ Kunzle. *The Early Comic Strip*: 329.

unmasterable series, lost origins, endless horizons... and... in order to work with the concept we focus it—but that focusing may always, to some degree, undermine the general concept of intertextuality in whose name we are working.”³⁴

What can be said about the importance of written discourse in *Industry and Idleness*, without reducing the complexity of the issue, is that Hogarth dramatizes the utilization of language. Whereas Goodchild’s success is due to the fact that he respects the written word, being a collector and preserver of texts, Idle’s failure demonstrates that utilization of verbal and written discourse is synonymous with social advancement. Paulson has argued that Hogarth “associates the visual language of images with the subculture; the language of words—at least of written, inscribed words like those of the Ten Commandments—with the dominant or master’s culture.”³⁵ One should add to this observation that Hogarth takes great pleasure in complicating the actual association of words in print with persons, thus creating iconoclastic and powerfully ironic works of art that both draw on and destroy discursive traditions. In this respect he resembles Swift, whose iconoclastic stance was even more radical than that of Hogarth.³⁶

Considering that this complex satirical use of printed words is only one of the numerous multiplex forms of intertextual and intermedial discourse that finally create meaning, including ambiguity and indeterminacy, in Hogarth’s prints and series, one begins to see the genius of an artist who knew how to exploit and play with texts and images, with words in pictures, and with signs and icons, in a manner that still fascinates us today.

³⁴ J. Culler. *The Pursuit of Signs*: 111. See also p. 109.

³⁵ HGW: 137.

³⁶ For a thoughtful study of iconoclasm in the works of Swift and Hogarth see Ronald Paulson’s recent *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989) 1-48; 149-203.

PART TWO
CONVERSATION AND CONDUCT

NIELS HAASTRUP

THE COURTESY-BOOK AND THE PHRASE-BOOK
IN MODERN EUROPE

The theme of this book is the courtesy-book and related genres: the related genre in question here is the one I have called the phrase-book. A major topic of my contribution will be a comparison of the two genres: the courtesy-books and the ready-made dialogues found in the phrase-books. Whenever people write about courtesy-books they seem to run into problems of definition. The courtesy-book has many interfaces. Not even Manfred Beetz (see bibliography) appears to consider the related genre that I am going to introduce, and this is not because he excludes from his book types of texts that display model polite behaviour, or texts that are not in prose as courtesy-books used to be. Beetz mentions the monolingual model dialogues of, for example, A. Sommer's *Ein Hundert Teutsche Conversations-Gespräche* (1664), which covers not only the highbrow aesthetic dialogue as written by Castiglione (p. 65), but also everyday communication in typical situations (p. 66). Beetz (1988) analyses the stylistics, syntax and speech acts of the dialogues, and limits his perspective to the monolingual model-dialogues. No more than, for instance, Mason (1935) or Nicholls (1985), does he go into the hundreds of bilingual textbooks on 'modern language teaching' that are registered and often even described. Stating this I imply the relevance of a major point made in this paper: that in peripheral countries like Denmark, the 'making of the gentleman' had to be more closely related to the learning and teaching of the dominant foreign languages, which in the main in Denmark did not include English until the heyday of nobility was over. The next point of my article is that the two genres, the courtesy-book and the phrase-book (as defined below), in some ways complement each other, when looked upon from the perspective of a minor language community. In short, the advice about language use not to be found in the textbooks on grammar and rhetorics, may often be found in another type of text called 'courtesy-book.'

First, in order to give the necessary background, I want to introduce my research perspective, and the related genre I work with: the 'Phrase-book-project,' or, as I call it in Danish with an obsolete word borrowed from French, the '*Parleur-project*.' I am trying to build up an inventory of the situations and encounters treated in phrase-books with Danish as a source or

a target language. My aim is to contribute to the history of the colloquial discourse of the past within my professional field: the Danish language. In other words I am collecting information on dialogues in the Danish language which are contained in bilingual textbooks meant for the teaching of spoken language. Focus is on types of situations and types of interlocutors, and differences and variations in the repertoire in the course of time. The project is in progress, but so far I have focussed on fairly old texts up to 1800. In those days the English tongue played a minor part on the continent, and this applies also to the kingdom of Denmark. Nevertheless, the examples I am going to present will be English and not Danish, and the specific points I would have been able to make regarding the Danish texts must needs be transferred to examples taken from the English-speaking world.

Secondly I have to explain how I use the word 'phrase-book.' In my terminology it is used as an equivalent to the French *guide de conversation* and thus it does not refer to a dictionary or a collection containing proverbs, maxims and quotations. As I use the word phrase-book, it refers to a specific genre within the area of language teaching, the collections of ready-made, idealized dialogues, presented in at least two languages, the source language and the target language(s). These bilingual dialogue texts were seldom published separately. As often as not the collections of ready-made bilingual dialogues appear as parts of textbooks, or sets of textbooks, as a link in the chain of useful resources within the field of language teaching.

One table of contents looks like this:

1. A new and useful grammar
2. A copious and well-registered vocabulary
3. Phrases and idioms
4. A collocation of Proverbs
5. Familiar Dialogues
6. A Collection of choice Letters
7. An historical Account of the Magnificence and Splendour of the city of London.
8. Some examples of the most usual Cards
9. Proper Directions for addressing persons of every Rank in Conversation and Letters.¹

In textbooks of this kind various rules and examples are to be found. To improve your 'knowing that': rules and paradigms in grammar, i.e. contrastive grammatical descriptions of the source and target languages structured according to the traditional systematic levels of analysis from letters to sentences, illustrated by examples. To improve your 'knowing how': examples to show the use of language are found in the second part of

¹ J. King/ Kœnig. *King's True English Guide* (Copenhagen, 1770).

the book, for instance, models for dialogues, letters, speeches, short stories. Of course the sections supplement each other. One can, for example, find specific vocabularies for each dialogue, or phrases arranged according to what we today, after Austin, would call speech acts. For instance, by Arnold, under these headings:

s.259: To confirm, to deny, to consent

s.261: To consult or consider

s.265: To ask a question

or classes of adverbs, of extreme importance for the indirectness of polite conversation, for instance by Festeau: "Adverbs of affirming (*sic*), of contradiction, of conclusion."²

However, rules of language use, i.e. 'knowing how' (what we today call pragmatic rules) will not be found in the grammar books. The proper place of pragmatics was in textbooks of Rhetorics, the discipline that supplemented Grammar in the traditional school curriculum handed down from antiquity. But Rhetoric gave no advice on performing dialogues, only on making different kinds of speeches, as Cicero himself states:

Contentionis praecepta rhetorum sunt, nulla sermonis, quamquam haud scio an possint haec quoque esse. Sed discentium studiis inveniuntur magistri, huic autem qui studeant, sunt nulli, rhetorum turba referta omnia, quamquam quae verborum sententiarumque praecepta sunt, eadem ad sermonem pertinebunt.³

The courtesy-book is in many respects a rhetoric of conversation, but as it was not handed down from antiquity, it had to be invented, and this is in fact what happened. Rhetoric and the courtesy-books are not structured in the same way. Rhetoric models the creative processes of speech production (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*). The dynamic of the dialogue, on the other hand, cannot be planned in the same way as a speech, because it is conducted by two persons. The courtesy-books underline general principles of reputation and good conduct, just as in textbooks of rhetoric the moral aspect is stressed (*orator, vir bonus*, etc.). These principles can be further explained by an experienced authority in rational deliberations (though the material used in the work quoted is offered for more specific ends). Or could be shown in textbooks by means of model dialogues (monolingual as for instance by Bellegarde, or bilingual as in the phrase-book in my use of the word), just as one finds self-explanatory model

² Adverbs by Th. Arnold (*Theodor Arnolds Grammatica Anglicana et Danica Concentrata*. 2^o ed. Copenhagen, 1791) and P. Festeau (*A New and Easy French Grammar*. London, 1667).

³ Cicero. *De officiis* I, 'On moral goodness' Lib.I. cap. xxxvii. marg. nr.132 ad finem. Loeb. p. 134.

speeches in textbooks of Rhetoric. These dialogues function as models, although they are based on two conflicting principles: on the one hand a 'knowledge of the world' (or 'business as usual'), shared by the fictitious interlocutors, is presupposed, and on the other hand—as no stage directions are found—he user needs an exposé of the situation, which is given—just as on stage—solely through the wording of the utterances of the interlocutors, a feature often parodied).

The rhetoric of conversation, which I venture to call the field of the courtesy-book, is seldom directly combined with the textbooks comprising grammar and dialogues. And yet, one may naturally find examples that show the family relationship. For instance, by Du Grain, who taught in Halle, a centre of Pietism and of great importance for Danish education in the 18th century; or by Bertram, the author of one of the larger Danish textbooks on the English language, *The Royal English-Danish Grammar* (Copenhagen, 1753), who edited a little pamphlet on ethics, *Ethics from Several Authors* (Copenhagen, 1751). This he later included in vol. II of his great work, which covered the whole range from phonetics, his special interest, to dialogues.

Let me now compare the courtesy-book and the phrase-book. First a puzzling problem: in courtesy-books, social encounters between persons identified as foreigners and natives are not foreseen to any great extent. But of course they are found. Although the phrase-books are constructed to give young persons a certain competence in foreign languages, for instance, as travellers on their 'grand tour,' one seldom, to my knowledge, finds in the dialogues reference to differences in manners between western nations. The fictitious interlocutors often seem to belong to the same speech community, i.e. in the one column one finds a pair of native speakers of the source language, in the other a parallel pair of native speakers of the target language. It is presupposed that other things are equal in the two language communities, and the dialogues often indirectly present themselves as general models—setting aside the choice of source and target languages—within the ethnocentric scope of western civilisation. But the different interlocutors of the user (i.e. the persona of identification, which is supposed to be the user of the ready-made dialogues—often a gentleman) are to a great extent defined sociologically according to class, age, professions, sex etc.

But insofar as the ready-made dialogues show encounters between foreigners and natives, structured according to prototypical situations, one finds here an important lack of congruity between the phrase-books and the courtesy-books. The strict parallel to the phrase-book, then, is not the prose of the ordinary courtesy-book, but the texts of books such as *The Gentleman's Guide in his Tour...* Yet these books are not in the first place

meant to inform young noblemen of problems of communication and the manners to be expected abroad. One finds, of course, some useful remarks on the topic, but most books on travelling—setting aside books on postal routes—are memoirs from, and narratives about, real or fictitious journeys and are to be found in itineraries. An example may be quoted from France, in the persona of a traveller, though the writer may often in such cases be relying on the works of his predecessors. The itineraries usually follow the postal routes, and are not systematized along the lines of typical encounters between natives and foreigners.

Thus to some extent the phrase-book shows what the courtesy-book prescribes. An important difference is that the dialogues do not show what the courtesy-books forbid. If one wants to have misbehaviour exemplified, one has to read the contemporary parodies and satires (as by Swift, Defoe, etc.). Also parodic dialogues are to be found. But satire or not, the linguistic norms underlying the criticism are up to date, I presume.

The pragmatic conversational rules one needs will often be arranged in two ways in the courtesy-books:

a) according to the general principles of polite and efficient language use, often in the imperative mood, addressed to the young person who is soon to be launched into society

b) as reflections on, and practical recommendations about personal behaviour and strategies, in a variety of situations in which you find yourself in conversation with different interlocutors.

The universals of politeness and efficiency are shown by the ready-made model dialogues—the degree and kind of politeness used being thoroughly adapted to the interlocutors, the purpose and the circumstances. In the courtesy-books, however, they are explicitly expressed. When one compares the advice of the courtesy-books with the Gricean maxims, it is striking to observe in the first place that they are all there, though not arranged as by Grice under four headings). To mention a text, well-known in Danish circles, which was translated into English, reference can be made to Baron Knigge's *Practical Philosophy of Social Life* or to Rohr (1715), not to mention the many German treatises not translated into Danish, such as Reich (1789), Trussler (1784) and Chladenius (1742).

It will no doubt be generally agreed that efficiency is not the main point of the courtesy-books. The principle of politeness is paramount, or even better the principle of adequate politeness. Note these headings from Knigge (1799):

III. Let your civility and kindness to inferiors always be well regulated

IV. Be not too intimate with people who have not had a polite education.⁴

Or these:

I. On conversation with adventurers of the more harmless class

II. On conversation with imposing adventurers.⁵

As we know from Brown and Levinson's book on *Politeness* (1978), the whole aim of politeness is not just to flatter and please, but to respect and be respected according to one's societal status. That is to say that one should be modest, but not accept nor unintentionally use face-threatening acts, the 'FTAs' made famous by Brown and Levinson—to be used in cases when you want to provoke a duel. We can quote Knigge (1799) once again, this time his first chapter, which has this heading: "Every man must render himself respected in the world." This is an essential point, because it tells you not only to please others, but to insist on your right to pursue your own ends. Thus the whole universe of the courtesy-book is suspended between two ends, on the one hand modesty, on the other hand the desire to prevail or at least to maintain one's position. The adequate degree of politeness should be chosen by taking into account the relations between oneself and one's interlocutors. This is expressed in a figure in one of the classics among courtesy-books, Guazzo's *De civili conversatione libri quattuor*, (Strasbourg 1614) Fol.I, verso: 'Schematismus generalis totius operis.' (see plate XIII)

With this end in view the dialogues of the phrase-books are equipped with a great reservoir of phrases, on the one hand the socially-oriented, tentative and indirect ones which include many modalities that you have to use when you address your betters, on the other hand the task-oriented, efficient ones, the shortcuts you are free to use when you address humble and subordinate people, as for instance, a coachman.

We come now to our next section on more specific hints given to guide you in a variety of practical situations with a variety of interlocutors. To study this it is necessary to look at the criteria according to which this information is distributed in the phrase-books and the courtesy-books respectively.

As a point of departure, a more detailed table of contents from a phrase-book may be illuminating:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| I | To salute and enquire after one's Health |
| II | Before going to Bed, in Bed, and at rising in the Morning |
| III | A Gentleman dressing himself |
| IV | A Lady dressing herself |

⁴ A. von Knigge. *Practical Philosophy of Social Life*. (London, 1799) Book I, Chapter IX.

⁵ Knigge. *Op. cit.* Book II, Chapter XIV.

V	To make a Visit in the Morning
VI	To Breakfast
VII	To order Dinner
VIII	Before and at the Dinner
IX	To drink Coffee and Tee
X	To speak English
XI	With an English Language-Master
XII	Of the Danish Tongue between two Englishmen
XIII	Betwixt two Friends
XIV	With a Bookseller
XV	Between a Gentleman a Taylor and a Woollen-Draper
XVI	With a Shoemaker
XVII	With a Periwigmaker
XVIII	To hire Lodgings
XIX	Between two young Gentlewomen
XX	To play at Cards. Between two young Ladies
XXI	To go to see a Play
XXII	To desire one to sing
XXIII	To write a letter
XXIV	To make an Exchange
XXV	Going upon a Journey
XXVI	In an Inn
XXVII	To embark on the Packet-Boat
XXVIII	With a Coachman
XXIX	Between a sick Person and a Surgeon
XXX	Of a Christening, a Wedding and a Burial. ⁶

Let us now compare the structure of phrase-books and courtesy-books. The phrase-books are ordered in a variety of ways, often beginning with domestic dialogues, then proceeding via local merchants to the needs of travelling, etc. In the courtesy-books classes of interlocutors are constituted for example by their psychology (the four cardinal humours and their complexions), or by their present state of mind (sorrow, grief, joy or happiness). Let us look at some different ways of arranging advice on conversation in the courtesy-book. Reich arranges his advice under headings which all contain the word *Sprache* (language):

- On language in social conversation in general
- The language of the chatterbox
- The language of the silent or taciturn
- The language of the unsuccessful
- The language of the wag
- The language of the mockingbird
- The language of the debater
- The language of the stubborn
- The language of the thoughtless

⁶ C. Bertram. *The Royal English-Danish Grammar* (Copenhagen, 1753) I, Headings of chapters I-XXX, pp. 50-156.

The language of the sycophant
 The language of the laudator
 The language of the flatterer
 The language of the lyer
 The language of the booster
 The language of the talebearer
 The language of the swearer
 The language of the promising
 The language of the gossipmonger
 The language of the backbiter
 The language of the adviser
 The language of the scolder
 The language of the teacher
 The language of the initiated
 The language of women
 The language of the complaining.⁷

The first chapter offers the usual general rules of efficiency and politeness, but later chapters, although they all contain the word *Language*, have different perspectives, from stylistics (choice of words) to moral and conversational advice. Exemplifications for some of these can be found in the ready-made dialogues. For instance:

III. *The language of the silent or the taciturn.* An often-used dialogue is the one concerning: '*Pourquoi on ne parle pas*' (Rodde, 1749, pp. 198-202).

VII. *The language of the debater.* An often-used dialogue is the one concerning: Conversation of two learned persons.

XVII. *The language of promise*, which resembles grammatical treatments of speech acts; how to promise, etc.)

Another book, that by Rohr (1715), is categorized by Germanists as a *Hausvaterbuch*, i.e. giving advice on the prudent and efficient administration of the domestic sphere. Nevertheless it is also a courtesy-book, giving general advice on language. It arranges the advice under headings that all of them contain the word *Klugheit* (prudence) used in chapters such as:

- | | |
|------|---|
| I | Von der Klugheit ins gemein |
| II | Von der Klugheit seine Actiones anzustellen |
| III. | Von der Klugheit eines Christen |
| IV | Von der Klugheit den Verstand zu schärfen, und Wissenschaften zu erlangen |
| V | Von der Klugheit seinen Willen zu bessern und tugendhaft zu leben |

It also includes special advice on many domestic matters, as do many ready-made dialogues, not least the ones with titles such as *Dialogues domestiques*, where one can learn, for instance, how to reprimand severely

⁷ J.C.F. Reich. *Die Sprache* (Berlin, 1789) p. XIII-XVI Inhalt (my translation).

your man or maidservant. (Cf. Rodde 1749, p. 178, Dialogue LXXV: 'La Servante est grondée.')

The registers quoted so far are in the main structured differently from those of the phrase-books. A greater resemblance is found if a comparison is made with the courtesy-book by the German, von Knigge (see quotation given above from 'On Conversation with People of various Ranks in Civil Life').

- i On physicians
- ii On quacks and charlatans, and the mischief caused by them
- iii On apothecaries
- iv On conversation with lawyers and attornies
- v On conversation with military men
- vi On conversation with merchants, shop-keepers and dealers.
- vii On conversation with booksellers
- viii On conversation with language masters, music masters and teachers in general.
- ix On conversation with tradesmen and mechanics
- x On conversation with Jews.⁸

Finally I want to comment on an example, in connection with which the courtesy-book brings reflections on the profession and the professional pride of an individual in social life, and a ready-made dialogue shows his professional behaviour when serving two customers in his shop—a bookseller. We find in the text of a courtesy-book by Knigge (1799) in chapter XIII, 'On Conversation with People of various Ranks in Civil Life,' in the section called 'Observations on Booksellers.' Knigge introduces them in the following way:

Conversation with booksellers would afford matter sufficient for a separate chapter, in which we could advance a great deal in the praise of those gentlemen of this profession, who do not conduct their concerns on principles of Jewish gain, and who observe a punctilious nicety in the works they publish, not suffering themselves to be actuated by the prospect of lucre, and usher into the world such works as tend to vitiate the taste and corrupt the morals of the age; of booksellers, like many within the circle of our knowledge at this time in London, who do honour to their profession, and have the propagation of truth and real illumination at heart, who encourage and support literary merit wherever they discover it, and improve their daily intercourse with men of learning to increase their store of useful knowledge, to cultivate their mind and adorn their heart with laudable sentiments. By way of contrast, we might say much more of those booksellers who, notwithstanding their having many years supplied the public with works of wit and learning, are nevertheless as ignorant and stupid as they were when they commenced their apprenticeship; who value and purchase manuscripts and new books from the plausibility of the title,

⁸ Knigge. *Op. cit.* ch. XIII, p. 194.

or the quantity of sheets they contain; and in order to keep up the vitiated taste of our age, employ beardless boys and ignorant girls to write miserable romances and stupid nursery-tales for them; who dress up the most pitiful nonsense, and to render it marketable, furnish an imposing and fashionable title and tasteless prints, and bribe venal reviewers to recommend such shapeless monsters as the offspring of elegant wit and learning.

Finally we could direct authors how to treat booksellers of that sort to avoid becoming their slaves; how they should proceed to render themselves respected by them, and in what shape they ought to mould the products of their wit and studies to be employed by these literary harpies. But these being partly secrets of our profession, which we great literati must keep to ourselves, and therefore are not permitted to disclose them in a book to be read by readers of all classes.

Upon the first blush it would appear that all booksellers whose business is conducted with tolerable success, must gain a fortune by their trade, if we consider the rage which prevails in all ranks for reading, even from the cobbler's stall to the palace of the first Peer of the realm. But if the journals of most booksellers were open to our inspection, we should perhaps be of a different opinion; we should see how much the increased number of circulating libraries hurts them, and what enormous sums are due to many of them by people who either will or cannot pay them, and be astonished how they are able to maintain their credit.⁹

Here is the text of the dialogue we find in *Bertram*:

A —Sir, have you any new Books?

C —Yes sir, what Sort of Books do you desire to have? Will you have Books of History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Divinity, Physick or Law?

A —No, I look only for some Books of Poetry

C —I can furnish you with them in all Sorts of Languages. For I have all the Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French and English Poets.

B —You have also a great many of them

C —You say true Sir, what Poets have you a mind to buy?

A —Pope's works in twelves, Dryden's Poems and Voltaire's Writings in the last and best Edition.

C —I have all those Books

A —Let me see them, if you please

[.../...]

—Will you have them gilt on the Back and titled

—Yes surely

—Must they be gilt in the leaves ?

—There is no Occasion for that

—There they be, as you desire them.

B —This Binding is not good

A —This Book is not well sewed

C —There is another for it

A —What do you ask for this Book?

C —It will cost you two Crowns

⁹ Knigge. *Op. cit.* 'On conversation with booksellers.'

A —That is too much
 C —Tis a set Price
 A —I'll give you nine Shillings for it
 C —It stands me in more than you bid me for it
 A —I can hardly believe it
 C —I assure you it costs me three half Crowns in Quires, and two Shillings for the Binding you would not have me sell my Books to loss
 A —Far from it, I would have you get something
 C —hen you must give me ten Shillings for it
 A —There they will be. I will not stand on so small a Matter
 [.../...]
 A (to B) —What Books do you want ?
 [.../...]
 A —But I have Occasion for Writing Paper, Pens, In sealing wax and wafers
 C —I sell nothing of all that but you will find it at the Stationer's who keeps the next Shop.
 A —Farewell sir
 C —Sir I am your most humble Servant. I thank you for your Custom.¹⁰

In the dialogue one finds exemplified how nicely the gentleman treats the bookseller (a behaviour not in evidence when he talks to a coachman or even a tailor). How competent the bookseller is too, both in presenting his collection and in maintaining that his specific field is books and not pens and paper, and how nicely he avoids having his price beaten down when discussing this delicate topic with the gentleman, who appears to be rather ashamed of having tried to lower the price at all.

Let me conclude: the ready-made dialogues of the textbooks for foreign language teaching are a genre related to the courtesy-book, though the one demonstrates in a dramatic form what the other prescribes in prose by reasoning.

1a) The two genres touch on the same theme: adequate and polite linguistic behaviour.

1b) The two genres take an interest in addressing (i.e. *Anrede*), using the right titles, the right personal pronoun, etc.). In a grammar book you will find the corresponding advice in sections on speech acts and adverbs of modality, or in the letter books and the complementatoria i.e. *Komplimentierbücher*.

2) The two genres address themselves to a common group of users: young people from the upper classes - and of course parvenues too.

3) In other words, the two genres were both used —we may suppose— where education was offered, whether private or institutional.

¹⁰ Bertram. *Op. cit.* Dialogue XIV: 'With a bookseller'.

In conclusion I want to return to my initial statement, that the writers on courtesy-books have overlooked, among the genres related to the courtesy-book, the phrase-book with its ready-made dialogues. If one accepts this, one might wonder why the two genres are not to be found bound together in the same cover and written by the same author? One answer might be that the authors of the linguistic textbooks that included ready-made dialogues were not authorities on morality. On the contrary, they were often foreigners or adaptors of texts written by foreigners, and therefore suspect of lacking in loyalty as subjects, and of not being orthodox as Christians (i.e. Calvinists, Huguenots accepted as refugees). An example may be quoted from the Danish equestrian academy in Sorø, about 1630. The language master, Daniel Matras, was not employed and paid as a professor, and was not allowed to teach anything but language and table-manners. Ethical education was in the hands of theologians. Nevertheless the linguistic routines aimed at in the two disciplines were the same. The dialogues used in language teaching would not, I presume, demonstrate uses of language that the theologians would disapprove of.

In modern times the same unfortunate borderlines seem to be found between fields of study touching on the same theme. The first borderline is found between linguistics and literature. A working group in Wolfenbüttel HAB, which I have some connection with, is studying the history of language teaching. You will find lots of research work and bibliographies on textbooks in this field which are seldom found in the bibliographies of research work conducted by historians of literature. The second borderline is that between diachronic and synchronic studies of linguistic conversation. On the one hand, there are historical studies on language teaching and courtesy, which not infrequently show some knowledge of modern pragmatic studies; on the other hand, there are studies in what is called 'politeness,' without any historical perspective. One finds this, for instance, in textbooks by Leech (1983), Brown (1983) and Brown & Levinson (1978) etc., although in general these works are based on modern research, such as that by Grice and Goffman. If these brilliant scholars know how much our ancestors knew and wrote on those topics, they do not reveal their knowledge.

Now why don't modern research workers studying colloquial routines of the past use as a source the ready-made dialogues found in textbooks of language teaching? Maybe it is because some research workers do not need this kind of source. They disregard dialogues in their mother-tongues, because they do not come from minor countries, as I do, in which the linguistic textbooks concerning the 'making of the gentleman' were linked to the learning and teaching of the dominant foreign languages. The bilingual model dialogues in the phrase-books give a practical example of

some aspects of the behaviour that the courtesy-books prescribe. As we had no Danish Bellegarde or Sommer to present model dialogues in the Danish language in its own right, the Danes, if desired, might use the dialogues printed as vernacular parallels in the bilingual textbooks meant for foreign language teaching. And this is precisely why I have felt that my investigations in this field might be relevant as a complement to a more comprehensive research into courtesy-books.

The dominant foreign language in Denmark, in the period I have studied up till now, was German, and the foreign language *à la mode* was French. The texts used for instruction in modern languages, almost always French, as well as in manners, often passed to Denmark through German adaptations. The selection of prototypical situations and encounters for the ready-made dialogues was thus not made by Danes, but often by German language masters. As the language *à la mode* from the 17th to the early 19th century was French, it seems quite obvious that an initiative to register courtesy-books should come from France, and just as obvious to focus on the fact that books on manners and linguistic politeness to some extent were imported directly or indirectly to minor peripheral countries, and that this status connected them to the teaching and training of foreign languages and the texts used for this purpose, the ready-made dialogues of grammars and phrase-books.

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DIETER A. BERGER

MAXIMS OF CONDUCT INTO LITERATURE:
JONATHAN SWIFT AND *POLITE CONVERSATION*

What do conduct-books have in common with cookbooks ? The answer is that both, teaching rules to realize an acknowledged cultural ideal, are judged primarily by their utility and are therefore generally regarded as an ephemeral and sometimes even trivial category of sub-literature. This is certainly not the whole truth about the vast and manifold literature of courtesy, but it pinpoints the prevailing attitude towards this genre of writing. Barbara Zähle, writing in 1933, maintained:

Conduct-books belong almost exclusively to the literature of fashion which is firmly bound to the tastes and ideals of a particular time, and only aims at serving the needs of the moment. They emerge and pass away in the stream of culture on which they are floating. [my translation] ¹

This is why books on the *bon ton* are relatively soon outdated; after their time they are of interest primarily to the cultural historian because they mirror 'the process of civilization' (Norbert Elias). ² However, nobody would presume to classify books on correct behaviour or on good cooking as high literature, or to accord to them the status of a work of art. It is true, a few works—for instance Chesterfield's *Letters*—have escaped this general fate of the literature of use and have been adopted into literary history because of outstanding aesthetic or stylistic qualities. On the other hand, courtesy texts on conversation even by major 17th and 18th century writers such as Bacon, Temple, Defoe, Richardson, or Fielding,³ to name but a few, have virtually been forgotten and are known only by the specialist. Swift, however, succeeded in saving his *Polite Conversation* from oblivion by

¹ "Sie gehören fast durchweg zur Modeliteratur, die an Zeitgeschmack und Zeitidealgebunden ist und nur dem Augenblick dienen will. Sie entstehen und vergehen mit dem Strome der Kultur, von dem sie getragen sind..." (Barbara Zähle. *Knigges Umgang mit Menschen und seine Vorläufer*. (Heidelberg, 1933) 2.)

² Norbert Elias. *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation, Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. (Frankfurt/Main, 1976) 2 vol.

³ Francis Bacon. "Of Discourse." *Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral* (1625); "Short Notes for Civil Conversation" in *Remains* (1648); William Temple. *Heads designed for an Essay on Conversation*; Daniel Defoe. "Of the Immorality of Conversation, and the Vulgar Errors of Behaviour." *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. (1720); Samuel Richardson. "General Rules for Agreeable Conversation in a Young Man." *Familiar Letters on Important Occasions* (1741); Henry Fielding. *An Essay on Conversation in Miscellanies* (1743).

elevating his maxims of conduct to the level of satire, thus creating a work of art enjoyed even today more for its ironic form than its didactic content.

We should remember that what has been labelled as 'conduct' or 'courtesy' literature is in itself a vastly heterogeneous body of writing, dealing, each in a particular way, with "courteous behaviour, graceful politeness or considerateness in intercourse with others" (the definition given in the SOED).⁴ This branch of education was extremely popular in England's neo-classical age. The number of courtesy works on conversation, on which alone I shall focus in this paper, has been estimated to amount to over two hundred titles between the years 1650 and 1800.⁵ Not surprisingly, the sermons, periodical essays, philosophical dialogues, or aphoristic reflections are highly different in tone and content and possess varying stylistic and rhetorical qualities. Of course, the texts have different degrees of depth, too, for they stress either moral and social aspects of conversation, or teach rules of etiquette, or point out characteristics of the 'art' of conversation.⁶

And yet one can recognize in the courtesy tradition, from its beginning, two antithetical trends. Ann Kelly diagnosed that "one trend promoted the humanistic ideal of conversation through theoretical discussion or sensible advice while the other promoted a mechanical, 'cookbook' attitude toward conversation by insisting that the reader memorize proverbs and witty sententiae..."⁷ But, to be sure, this is again a radical reduction of a multiplicity of different attitudes and arguments, for it is not difficult to distinguish between various points of view (that of the courtier, the clergyman, the journalist, or the gentleman writer), between opposing philosophical concepts (the Hobbesian, the Lockean, or the Shaftesburyan view of the world), and even between class-bound opinions and tastes (aristocratic and bourgeois ideals). The wide variety of manuals and treatises attempting to familiarize the reader with the forms and conventions of correct conversation testifies to the social importance of that phenomenon in 18th century culture. So do, by the way, the many representations of conversation in literature.

The critical terms employed by the authors dedicated to the kaleidoscope of conversational conduct are often confusingly ambiguous. Swift's main term, for instance, is good manners, which he defined as "the art of making

⁴ Cf. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. 'Courtesy.'

⁵ Leland E. Warren. "Turning Reality Round Together: Guides to Conversation in Eighteenth-Century England." *Eighteenth-Century Life* 8 (1983): 66.

⁶ Cf. Dieter A. Berger. *Die Konversationskunst in England 1660-1740*. (München, 1978), esp. 87-108.

⁷ Ann Cline Kelly. "Swift's *Polite Conversation*: An Eschatological Vision." *Studies in Philology* 73 (1976): 204f.

every reasonable person in the company easy, and to be easy ourselves.”⁸ Other authors preferred to speak of good breeding, civility, or ceremony instead. Although the terms were often used interchangeably, Swift and others observed a crucial distinction between the particularized rules of good conduct and the general laws of social behaviour:

... so that the difference between good-breeding, and good-manners, lies in this; that the former cannot be attained to by the best understandings, without study and labour: whereas a tolerable degree of reason will instruct us in every part of good-manners, without other assistance.⁹

What Swift called good manners was often referred to in the 18th century as civility; it was the substance of courtesy, a universal of human nature, and therefore attainable for everybody relying on reason. Good breeding in contrast, i.e. the particular rules of courteous behaviour, also known as ceremony or etiquette, was an excellence acquired only by personal effort, either by the observation of social practice or by the study of books. Swift's distinction between good manners and good breeding is in accordance with the general conviction of most of his contemporaries, although they are perhaps using different terms. It transfers to the realm of courtesy two concepts of human nature essential to the English Enlightenment: the doctrine of uniformity¹⁰ and the fundamental insistence on reason.

Courtesy, being “a code of ethics, aesthetics, or peculiar information for any class-conscious group,” to repeat John Mason's tentative definition,¹¹ unites qualities from different origins. The same is true of conversation, of course, which in former times was not restricted to linguistic aspects, as generally in a 20th century use of the term, but carried with it the broader meaning of social intercourse. As a result of the influence of 16th century Italian writers such as Castiglione, Della Casa and Guazzo, and of the prominent 17th century French authors on *‘l'art de plaire dans la conversation’*—above all Mlle de Scudéry, Ortigue de Vaumorière, and Morvan de Bellegarde—who were all frequently translated into English, conversation became understood as a fusion of several ingredients: of correct language, propriety of manners, rhetorical elegance, and sparkling wit. Two other assumptions were often associated with it: the view that polite conversation was a genteel register characteristic of the upper classes, and that it was a mode of speaking adopted in public, and thus diametrically

⁸ *Hints on Good-Manners. The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. H. Davis. IV (Oxford, 1973) 221.

⁹ *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding*. Ed. cit., 217.

¹⁰ Cf. George C. Brauer, Jr. “Good Breeding in the Eighteenth Century.” *University of Texas Studies in English* 32 (1953): 25-44.

¹¹ John E. Mason. *Gentlefolk in the Making. Studies in the History of English Courtesy Literature and Related Topics, from 1531 to 1774*. (Philadelphia, 1935) 4.

opposed to private or intimate talk. It is true, there was not only one but possibly two or even more ideals of conversation flourishing in England at the beginning of the 18th century. Promoted to a considerable degree by Addison's and Steele's periodical essays, the earlier aristocratic ideal was more and more superseded by a bourgeois one. Conversation likewise ceased to be regarded as a weapon or as an egotistical means of shining in company, and rather became praised as a 'bond of society.' Having, however, outlined this change of the conversational paradigm in my book *Die Konversationskunst in England 1660-1740* (1978), I need not enlarge upon it here.

In spite of the variety of approaches to the matter of courtesy and the changing social ideals, the 18th century concept of conversation was rather a restricted one. It would not have agreed with a 20th century bestseller such as Barbara Walters' *How to Talk with Practically Anybody about Practically Anything* (New York, 1971). The neoclassical 'art of speaking' carried with it a particular social exclusiveness, and certainly did not admit all subjects or topics of conversation. It is thus all the more surprising that in spite of many different attitudes we are able to crystallize a set of general assumptions or issues resulting in a number of almost identical rules and maxims, which were repeated over and over again.

Especially in the popular books on etiquette, often anonymously published and frequently reprinted—for instance *The Rules of Civility* (1671) or *The Rules for Conversation* (1683)—the reader was made familiar with the essentials of conversational formality, politeness, elegance, and correctness. Though it would be tedious to list their well-known maxims here, we may mention that the main aspects covered were the refinement of language, vulgarity, the topics to be chosen and to be avoided, wit and raillery, the inclusion of women, monopolizing the conversation and storytelling, swearing and obscenity, and other related topics. Characteristically presented either as prescriptive norms or as ridiculous faults of behaviour, so that it was often difficult to distinguish one work on conversational ceremony from another, the primary aim of these manuals was an educational one. In contrast to the conviction that polite conversation could be learnt, a number of authors, among them Mlle de Scudéry, Chesterfield and Constable, embraced the notion that it is to be seen rather as an art, evident also in the title of anonymous works such as *The Art of Complaisance* (1673) and *The Art of Speaking* (there are several different publications with that title in the 17th century). The art supporters enlarged upon the parallels between elegant conversation and written literature, they praised the accuracy both of style and of pronunciation, and discussed the

several kinds of wit to be adopted by the polite gentleman.¹² Thus one group of writers assumed that a pleasing conversation could be realized by the mere observance of the rules, which helped to avoid the common mistakes and offences, whereas another group maintained that the conversational graces could be attained only by a few outstanding artists. However, attempts to reconcile the two contrasting notions and to solve this dilemma peculiar to 18th century conduct-books were often made. Naturally enough, it was a main object of Swift's satire.

Swift's longstanding preoccupation with the phenomenon of conversation, finding expression in almost a dozen different texts, has many facets. First of all it is important to note that he was as much interested in aspects of language as in manners. Convinced of a continual corruption of the English language he fiercely lashed the many false linguistic refinements adopted in his time, especially affected pronunciation, the shortening of words, abbreviations, the use of fashionable slang terms, conceited neologisms and clichés, and excessive punning. These evils are also denounced in his writings on conversation, but now they are presented in the larger context of ethics and manners. However, though a stern critic of morals and language, Swift was no morose and peevish pedant as the more mechanical writers on conduct—to judge only from their dry treatises—must have been. Rather he indulged in playing around with concepts and ideas, and even with his role as an author. This is why the reader has to always be on his guard and to sound out whether Swift is venturing his own opinion or hiding behind someone else's persona, and whether the particular text is written in a serious vein or with tongue-in-cheek. The employment of both overt and covert textual strategies enabled him to integrate a multiplicity of often contradictory opinions and odd points of view, which make his versions of conversational conduct of a far distant century such entertaining reading. I would like to concentrate now on three of Swift's short treatises on good manners—which must be understood in the literal sense—and draw from them the characteristics of his concept of conversation. On this basis the satirical alienations in his masterpiece *Polite Conversation* will appear clearly.

The three texts, *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation* (1763), *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding* (1754), and *Hints on Good-Manners* (1765), were probably conceived and written around the year 1712 which saw the publication of his important *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. Although published posthumously,¹³ they are important documents of his personal beliefs, underlining that his

¹² Cf. Henry Barker (trans.). *The Polite Gentleman; or, Reflections upon the Several Kinds of Wit*. . . (London, 1700).

¹³ Cf. H. Davis. Introduction to *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*. IV, xxxi, xxxvi.

concern with manners was part of a more comprehensive critique of social culture. Swift, too, reiterated the well-known maxims of conversation, but being a pessimist, he particularly emphasized its faults and errors. He is prompted to do so not so much by a general educational urge, but by the satirist's indignation "that so useful and innocent a Pleasure, so fitted for every Period and Condition of Life, and so much in all Men's Power, should be so much neglected and abused."¹⁴ Swift is obviously an adherent of the uniformity concept of human nature, and, in fact, his view of conversation in these short tracts is in no way specific of the upper classes of society. Quite in tune with his Enlightenment position regarding reason as man's most distinguishing quality, he also proclaimed reason and good sense respectively to be "the principal foundation of good manners."¹⁵ As man is no perfect being, however, but often misguided by pride and vanity, not an 'animal rationale' but only 'rationis capax,' as he wrote to Pope,¹⁶ he needs some additional help to guarantee undisturbed social intercourse. To him an authoritative code of conduct is thus nothing else than "a kind of artificial good sense to supply the defects of reason."¹⁷ Swift's justification of the elaboration of rules to regulate the conversation, particularly "of those who have weak understandings,"¹⁸ is therefore firmly rooted in his moral anthropology.

The rules proper "of being agreeable though not shining in company" are hardly original, of course. In *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation*, for instance, Swift discusses the folly of talking too much or about one's own person, the faults that in particular 'men of wit' are subject to, the abuse of raillery, which, nevertheless, is still estimated as "the finest part of conversation," loud laughter, the annoying interruptions of others, storytelling, and similar disgraces. For the most part they are rules of avoidance, because not the phenomenon of conversation as such is under attack, but its numerous abuses. Now and then their effect is illustrated with personal anecdotes and enhanced by the authoritative 'I' of the moralist. Swift's warning against needless ceremonies, for instance, is brought home to the reader through a whole series of amusing episodes ridiculing Monsieur Buys, a Dutch Envoy, or Monsieur Hoffmann, an equally over-ceremonious courtier in the company of Prince Eugene, or a court incident like the following one: "I have seen a duchess fairly knock'd down by the precipitancy of an officious coxcomb, running to save her the trouble of

¹⁴ *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation*, 88. Cf. also Berger, p. 103ff.

¹⁵ *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding*, 214.

¹⁶ 29 September 1725. *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. H. Williams (Oxford, 1963) III 103.

¹⁷ *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding*, 214.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

opening a door."¹⁹ By such comic sprinklings the teaching of good breeding is imbued with a personal and even literary quality rather exceptional in books on etiquette.

It is interesting to note that Swift's negative instances are drawn almost exclusively from aristocratic circles, even the Court, and not, as might be expected, from people ranking lower in the social hierarchy and therefore less familiar with the particulars of social decorum. This is to say that in spite of his attempted adoption of a universal point of view he could not refrain from bringing in, into the serious tracts, too, if only through the back door, the abuses most annoying to him, namely those practised by the upper classes. Polite conversation, the aristocratic variant of "the greatest, the most lasting, and the most innocent, as well as useful Pleasure of Life,"²⁰ was to him a key example of the cultural degeneracy of his time. Since the reign of Charles I, considered as the highest period of politeness in England as well as in France,²¹ he came to observe a continual corruption of manners and of speech, which reached a climax at the court of Charles II, "so that the *Court*, which used to be the Standard of Propriety, and Correctness of Speech, was then, and I think hath ever since continued, the worst School in *England*, for that Accomplishment."²² His often repeated maxim that "good-manners are not a plant of the court growth,"²³ thus forms a striking contrast to the convictions of Lord Chesterfield, the arbiter of aristocratic civility.

Swift, moreover, not content with the role of a critic of upper class manners, was to become a critic of English culture. For he also explained the degeneracy of conversation by another English peculiarity, namely the predominance of separate male circles and speech occasions. His belief was rather that the presence of ladies "would lay a Restraint upon those odious Topicks of Immodesty and Indecencies, into which the Rudeness of our Northern Genius is so apt to fall."²⁴ On the whole Swift's non-ironic tracts are marked by an endeavour to heighten the matter of conversational conduct—by referring it to Enlightenment ideals, uniting it with a general criticism of culture, bringing in aspects of gender, and admonishing the reform of aristocratic refinements—and to enliven the stylistic presentation with personal impressions and amusing anecdotes. In spite of this their overall didactic intent is not to be overlooked. In *Polite Conversation*,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁰ *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation*, 94

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. In Davis (ed.), IV, 10.

²³ *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding*, 216. See also *Hints on Good-Manners*, 222.

²⁴ *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation*, 95.

however, one of the last books he saw through the press before his mind became distorted, the approach to the subject of courtesy is one of literary alienation. Although an equal weight is put on instruction, the entertaining factor is of even greater importance. Now the concept of conversation as an art is also presented in the form of a literary work of art. It was the satirist's art, however, according to his motto "to vex the world rather than divert it."²⁵

One has the impression here that Swift presents a final reckoning with everything he abhorred and detested in conversation: what a special type of vain courtesy writers offered in the way of insipid rules and generalities, an aristocratic code of conduct which still believed it set the tone in taste and fashion, the concept of genteel and contrived conversation whose main aim was showing off, conceited wit and raillery of the Hobbesian kind, and altogether the view of conversation as a refined art rather than as a good-humoured and natural way of speaking. But instead of clothing his final statement in the form of plain railing, a common satirical practice of the day,²⁶ Swift reverted to a sophisticated technique of indirection which he had already brought to perfection in *A Modest Proposal*. The bewildering encoding of his convictions into the language of irony was not only a game with the reader, it was also the finest compliment he could pay to his ingenuity. Moreover, as irony is a powerful instrument of rhetoric, too, the indirect didactics of the conversational faults and errors are perhaps all the more effective.

A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation, According to the Most Polite Mode and Method Now Used at Court, and in the Best Companies of England, to quote the full title, consists of two parts:

—'An Introduction to the following Treatise,' containing the self-presentation of Swift's persona, Simon Wagstaff, his theory of conversation, and his method of selecting and compiling what he calls "flowers of shining Questions, Answers, Repartees, Replies, and Rejoynders."

—The 'Treatise' itself: in fact three dialogues between five men and three ladies at different times and social occasions of the day. Introduction and dialogues form a perpetual contradiction, which constitutes one pillar of the ironic structure of *Polite Conversation*. Obviously the conversation in the dialogues is neither genteel, nor ingenious (i.e. witty) or polite, and the bad manners of the speakers make them representative of the worst rather than

²⁵ Letter to Alexander Pope (Sept. 29, 1725). *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. H. Williams III 102.

²⁶ Cf. H.S. Davies. "Irony and the English Tongue." *The World of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. B. Vickers (Oxford, 1968) 129-153.

the best companies in England. The other pillar of irony is the persona technique, providing Swift with the opportunity of ridiculing detested ideas and points of view, and yet hiding behind a perplexing mask. Simon Wagstaff, in fact, is not only a vain, presumptuous and badly educated pedant; he is also a projector of laudable motives, who has spent much time and energy to be of benefit to his country. Unfortunately, however, the scheme put forward by him is based on a logic of paradox:

How often do we see at Court, at publick visiting Days, or great Men's Levees, and other Places of general Meeting, that the Conversation falls and drops to nothing, like a Fire without supply of Fuel. This is what we all ought to lament; and against this dangerous Evil, I take upon me to affirm, that I have in the following Papers provided an infallible Remedy. (p. 99f.)²⁷

This is just one instance of Wagstaff's absurd method of drawing wrong moral conclusions from trivial facts. The wealth of contorted argument and (pseudo-) witty examples in Swift's satire is almost inexhaustible so that it will be wise to restrict ourselves to its courtesy-book qualities.

What Wagstaff offers as a unique contribution was for many centuries, of course, the stock concern of books on conversational etiquette. Although even a glance at the objects discussed—repartees, story-telling, interrupting, double entendres, oaths, laughter, slang terms, etc.—will confirm to us that the matter is well known; yet the argumentation in which the maxims are embedded is rather odd. Some conversational faults are introduced as polished refinements, others are branded as faults, in the same way as serious authors had done though with nonsensical justifications, and sometimes Wagstaff's advice, starting from wrong implications, leads to absurd results. Thus the reader must constantly ask himself whether he is to take a statement at face value, or to understand it in its opposite meaning, or whether to reject it altogether as absurd. Being infused with so many incongruities of form and content, 'The Introduction' turns out to be an intricate parody. Swift's ridicule was not, however, aimed at the conduct-books as a whole or at the maxims as such. Rather this target was a particular type of prescriptive rule-book, filled with the technicalities of conversational ceremony and providing the reader with prefabricated speech examples. Hidden behind Swift's satire of the mechanical concept of conversation was, of course, the hope that the parodic game would make his readers sensitive to the deplorable practice of the day, and convince them of the necessity of a more reasonable, bourgeois means of communication.

The entertaining allusiveness of *Polite Conversation* is all the greater

²⁷ The page references to *Polite Conversation* are based on H. Davis' edition included in vol. IV of *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*.

when it is read against the background of the serious tradition. We feel, of course, Swift's satirical edge when Wagstaff constantly speaks of the 'Art of Polite Conversing'—in the same manner, by the way, he mentions the 'Art of Cookery' (115)—and when he likewise exalts it as a science. Wagstaff is convinced, moreover, that it is an art which can be taught, and "that publick Schools will soon be founded, for teaching Wit and Politeness, after my Scheme..." (113) He proposes further—and here Swift's satirical degrading of the art concept reaches a climax—that "some expert Gentlewoman, gone to Decay," is to act as an instructor, similar to a French gypsy and a dancing-master he had known teaching the accompanying graces of mien and gesture (104). Swift himself surely had no high opinion of dancing-masters who traditionally completed a 'genteel' education; neither had Dr. Johnson when he coined his blunt comment on Chesterfield that he "taught the morals of a whore and the manners of a dancing-master."²⁸ A similar ironic undermining occurs when the comic dialogues are elevated to the level of a scholarly treatise. Wagstaff informs us that because dialogue is "the best Method of inculcating any Part of Knowledge," he has imitated "the Pattern of other famous Writers in History, Law, Politicks, and most other Arts and Sciences" (113)—this is another clear reference to the parodic quality of the text. And when the young persons are enjoined to learn by heart certain questions and answers, and that those of Miss Notable and Mr. Neverout are proposed as "Patterns for all young Batchelors and single Ladies to copy after" (116) we may taste a double ridicule: not only of those 'cookbook' works on etiquette offering standard expressions and model speeches, but also of the actual custom of memorizing proverbs and witty phrases and even longer passages in order to excel in conversation.

The central issue behind Swift's satire is that between originality and cliché—whether to be creative and inventive in conversation or to clothe one's ideas in approved formulaic phrases and stock expressions. It is an outstanding structural feature in the three dialogues of *Polite Conversation*, too. Mackie Jarrell estimated that out of 960 'smart Turns of Wit and Humour' more than 500 had a proverbial air.²⁹ On the other hand, the use of proverbs in conversation was considered a blemish, of course. Even a pedant like Wagstaff distinguishes "between Proverbs, and those polite Speeches which beautify Conversation," and "utterly rejects them [i.e. proverbs] out of all ingenious Discourse." And yet they are, in fact, admitted by the paradoxical justification that "these were not originally Proverbs, but the genuine Productions of superior Wits, to embellish and support

²⁸ Cf. C.J. Rawson. "Gentlemen and Dancing-Masters: Thoughts on Fielding, Chesterfield, and the Genteel." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 1 (1967/68): 135.

²⁹ Mackie L. Jarrell. "The Proverbs in Swift's *Polite Conversation*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 20 (1956): 16.

Conversation.” (102) Wagstaff’s high regard for tradition and the continuity of language causes him even to complain, a few pages later, that “the Discourse of the Company were all degenerated into smart Sayings of their own Invention, and not of the true old standard.” (107) Written at a time when the aristocratic priority for ornament and form had to give way to the new ideals of bourgeois talk, i.e. communication, good humour, and naturalness, the absurdity of Wagstaff’s attitude is even more striking.

Thus Swift is both a writer of maxims of conduct and a critic of conduct literature. Convinced of the degeneracy of conversation in England, and upset by the many affectations, false refinements, and abuses of his common sense ideal, he attempted a reformation first by direct exhortation and then by parodic mockery. The different methods of presentation served different motives and certainly attracted different groups of readers, so that we can only guess which method was more effective. There can be no doubt, however, about the high literary quality of *Polite Conversation*. Apart from its utility to Swift’s contemporaries it still appeals to us by the brilliant transformation of courtesy material into art and by the playful fusion of parody and irony with satire. Even a reader abhorring conduct literature must be delighted with it.

TIM McLOUGHLIN

FIELDING'S *ESSAY ON CONVERSATION*:
A COURTESY GUIDE TO *JOSEPH ANDREWS* ?

What prompted this research was the realisation that Fielding was working on both the *Essay on Conversation* and *Joseph Andrews* at the same time. During those few difficult months at the end of 1741, "laid up in the Gout, with a favourite Child dying in one Bed, and my Wife in a Condition very little better, on another," these two projects were going forward.¹ Much ink has been spent on the genesis of *Joseph Andrews*, but little attention has been given to the coincidence that he was working on a standard conduct-book, the *Essay on Conversation*, while also writing his first novel.

It is interesting to recall that Richardson's *Pamela*, published in 1741, also had close ties with a projected conduct-book, his *Familiar Letters* (1741) written "to instruct handsome Girls, who were obliged to go out to Service... how to avoid the Snares that might be laid against their Virtue."² This case together with that of Fielding points to 1740-41 as a moment in English literature when two major fiction writers realised in different ways that the moral purpose of the conduct-book might be more pleasantly and extensively served by the novel.

The basic question therefore which this paper seeks to answer is what connection, if any, is there between the *Essay* and *Joseph Andrews* or, in another form, is *Joseph Andrews* an alternative way of writing the *Essay*, a kind of conduct novel ?³

In order to answer such questions it is important first to recall the main features of Fielding's *Essay*. It runs to about thirty pages and has three main sections. The first establishes a philosophical groundwork derived mainly from the liberal humanist tradition of Cicero and Locke: "Man is generally

¹ Preface, *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding* ed. Henry Knight Miller. Wesley Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 14. *An Essay on Conversation* is printed in this volume, 119-152.

² Johannes Stinstra, cited by T. C. Durran Eaves and Ben D. Kempel, *Samuel Richardson. A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 89-90.

³ The term 'conduct novel' is used by Catherine Sobra Green, *The Courtesy Novel (1740-1820): Women Writing for Women*, Ph.D. Georgia State University, 1983 (DA vol. 45 (1984) 190 A).

represented as an Animal formed for and delighting in Society.”⁴ Men make conversation, he says, of three sorts—“with God, with themselves, and with one another”—which categories may be dismissed as commonplace, but they are the major divisions of a book Joseph Andrews had read and which Fielding repeatedly alludes to, *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658).⁵ Conversation is “the Art of pleasing or doing Good to one another.”⁶ The word ‘conversation’ is used in a very broad sense of social intercourse. The interchangeability of the two terms—“pleasing or doing Good”—is crucial to Fielding’s moral argument that conversation is not just an art or skill to facilitate social acceptability, but an art to a moral end, namely “doing Good.” This manifests itself as good-breeding, which he sums up in Christian terms by citing the New Testament’s “comprehensive Rule”, namely, “Do unto all Men, as you would they should do unto you.”⁷

The imperative note of this reformist principle comes through in the authoritarian tone of the *Essay* and signifies the urgency which characterises Fielding’s moral outlook. The task is a pressing national issue. He had unwittingly summed up this view a couple of years earlier in *The Champion*: “Whatever is wicked, hateful absurd or ridiculous, must be exposed, and punished before this nation is brought to that height of purity and good manners to which I wish to see it exalted.”⁸

The second and third sections of the *Essay* give rules and advice on two ways of pleasing in conversation, by actions and by words. Approximately half the *Essay* deals with actions. Advice is given on how to entertain guests to dinner, the proper conduct for visiting a private house, attending a public assembly, how to behave towards superiors, equals and inferiors. The key phrases are, “we must be profitable Servants to each other: we are, in the second Place, to proceed to the utmost Verge in paying the respect due to others.”⁹

Although Fielding here puts his primary emphasis on profitable service it is not immediately apparent what this *will* achieve. Conversation is not for example a means to knowledge or self-discovery. “The first step in Conversation is to avoid hurting or giving any Offence.”¹⁰ Fielding, like

⁴ *Essay*, 119.

⁵ *Essay*, 121; see James E. Evans. “Fielding, *The Whole Duty of Man*, *Shamela*, and *Joseph Andrews*” *Philological Quarterly* 61, n° 1 (1982): 212. Evans points out that *The Whole Duty of Man* had been reissued in mid-1741 and Fielding defended it against its detractors (214).

⁶ *Essay* 123.

⁷ *Essay* 124; he repeats the point in *The Covent-Garden Journal* 55 (18 July, 1752).

⁸ *The Champion* (22 Dec. 1739), in *The Complete Works of Henry Fielding*, ed. William Ernst Henley, 16 vols. (London: Cass, 1967), XV, 113.

⁹ *Essay*, 126.

¹⁰ *Essay*, 125.

Locke, advocates the cultivation of a civility which upset nobody and improve the minds and hearts of the participants. Rawson has noted giving pleasure to others in conversation is for Fielding a kind of moral activity. This differs markedly from Chesterfield's view summed up in his advice to his son, "Pleasing in company is the only way of being pleased in it yourself."¹¹ The decidedly moral thrust of Fielding's *Essay* is more clear if we set it alongside his comment on civility made in *The Champion*: "Civility, he writes, is a quality entirely necessary to the humanising mankind, without which they would degenerate into brutes and savages."¹²

This dark anxiety is not to be ignored in the more obvious feature of the moral certitude of the language and grammar of the *Essay*. The writing has the assured authority of a carefully thought-out, logical, if somewhat dry treatise. Even drinking is a calculated affair, which is unusual for Fielding. The well-bred host, he says, "is to see that the Bottle circulate sufficiently to afford every Person present a moderate Quantity of Wine, if he chuses it."¹³ But as so often in Fielding's novels the writing takes on a fresh verve when he depicts the follies of mankind. The ill-bred host, by contrast, not unlike the squire in *Joseph Andrews* is the one who "measures the Honesty and Understanding of Mankind by the Capaciousness of their Swallow; who sings forth the Praises of a Bumper, and complains of the Light in your Glass; and at whose Table it is difficult to preserve your Senses as to preserve your Purse at a Gaming Table, or your Health at a Bawdy-House."¹⁴ The *Essay* is more energetic and entertaining in its ridicule of the dangers of ill-breeding than its advice on good behaviour.

The third section on words dwells on errors in conversation. Fielding repeats several accepted dicta from conversation-books of the day: avoid arguments, slander, blasphemy, indecency, other people's misfortunes, and especially insensitive raillery.¹⁵ Following Locke and d'Ortigue he writes, "while in some hands it (raillery) diverts and delights with its Dexterity and Gentleness; in others, its paws, daubs, offends, and hurts."¹⁶ Again the language admits its dark anxieties.

Who then, we might ask, is Fielding writing the *Essay* for? If we compare the *Essay* with other courtesy-books of the day written for the nobility, say John Costeker's *The Fine Gentleman* (1732) or Sir William

¹¹ Chesterfield to his Son, 5 Sept. 1748, in *Selected Letters of Lord Chesterfield*, ed. Phyllis M. Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1929) 88; C.J. Rawson, *Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal under Stress* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) 12.

¹² *The Champion* (15 March 1740) in *Complete Works*, XV 244.

¹³ *Essay* 129.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Leland E. Warren, "Turning Reality Round Together: Guides to Conversation in Eighteenth-Century England" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 8 (1983): 74.

¹⁶ *Essay* 149.

Keith's *An Essay on the Education of a Young British Nobleman* (1740), it is clear that Fielding has in mind a much broader social context for good breeding than they do.¹⁷ Fielding's views on how good-breeding, social rank, education, and manners interrelate are to say the least ambiguous, but for my present purpose I wish to note that he has a wider readership in mind, and that this in turn poses at least two problems in terms of the conventions of writing a conduct-book. The wider the social audience the more difficult to prescribe appropriate conduct, and secondly it is not easy for the writer to strike the right note of address.

Fielding obviates the first problem by emphasising virtue as distinct from manners. Like his friend Hogarth, not to mention Defoe and the *Spectator* before him, he argues that virtue and good-breeding are as open to the middle and lower classes as to the gentry and nobility. "A Man may... be Great without being Good, or Good without being Great."¹⁸ The stress on morals rather than manners means that "the union of a good Heart with a good Head" is as likely to be evident in the postillion boy as in Parson Adams.¹⁹ This attention to the morality of conduct has roots, as Battestin has shown, in the sermons of Barrow, Tillotson, Clarke and others who advocated "a pragmatic, commonsense Christianity."²⁰ Although he recognises that social differences arise from "Title, Birth, Rank in Profession, Age or actual Obligation,"²¹ his audience is not to use "the fortuitous Accident of Birth, the Acquisition of Wealth, with some outward Ornaments of Dress" as an excuse to treat supposed inferiors with disdain.²² Fielding's implied reader of the *Essay* is thus a Christian of middle station moving in lower and higher social circles than himself for whom conversation and good breeding are a means to moral improvement. The guiding principle of the *Essay* and the major thrust of *Joseph Andrews* is an echo of the seventeenth-century preacher Isaac Barrow, "in all reason and equity we should readily pay the same love, respect, and comfort to others, which we expect from others."²³

¹⁷ John E. Mason. *Gentlefolk in the Making: Studies in the History of English Courtesy Literature and Related Topics from 1531 to 1774* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935) 195.

¹⁸ Preface, *Miscellanies* 12.

¹⁹ *Essay* 135; Fielding often refers to the poor as the 'most useful part of mankind'; see Malvin R. Zirker, *Fielding's Social Pamphlets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966) 19.

²⁰ Martin C. Battestin. *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews* (Middletown, Conn., 1959) 14.

²¹ *Essay* 133. Fielding's respect for birth has been criticised as inconsistent with his respect for intrinsic merit: see Michael Irwin, *Henry Fielding: The Tentative Realist* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 22, and Rawson, *op. cit.* 25-27.

²² *Essay* 140; for a similar thrust in earlier conduct-books, see Mason, *op. cit.* 94.

²³ Isaac Barrow. "Of a peaceable temper and carriage" *The English Sermon II* (1650-

The right note of address was a much more complex problem. The fact that Fielding was engaged on a conduct book and a novel on much the same theme suggests he was looking for an appropriate way to put this across. Like Richardson he gave his attention to his novel rather than the conduct book. What factors might have influenced this preference?

Good conduct was undoubtedly a topic of interest to middle-class readers as is shown for example by the many reprintings of *The Spectator*. But in the period 1720-1740 the creative energy of writers goes less on advising the middle-class reader on how to conduct himself than on satirising the upper classes "upon subjects that were almost exclusively interesting to them".²⁴

Another factor was that while satirists operated as a middle-class conscience mocking the gentry and nobility for failing the spirit of courtesy expressed for example by Spenser, the middle and lower class reading public were, as the several scriptural allusions in *Joseph Andrews* indicate, cultivating their morality elsewhere. Their moral education came primarily from the Bible, from religious books like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, from books of sermons, but also from a variety of secular reading such as *The Spectator*, novels—or chapbook versions of them—and the prints of Hogarth.²⁵ Fielding's *Essay* shows signs of being caught between the prescriptive attitudes of satire and certain kinds of conduct-books and the desire for a more descriptive means—such as was found on the stage or the novel or in Hogarth—of illustrating what he meant by middle-class good-breeding.

Fielding's *Essay* falls uneasily between these two kinds of discourse. The manner is authoritative, following the conventions of certain conduct-books, but its authority does not emanate from the satirist's implicit frame of reference, the discourses of chivalry and romance, as well as of the literature of Augustan Rome. When Pope writes, "Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave/ Shall walk the World, in credit to his grave," he presumes on the reader's agreement as to how the rich and the noble should behave; if they fail to do so they deserve to be exposed.²⁶ Fielding is not writing specifically for the "rich or noble knave." On the other hand his *Essay* does not have the discursive insinuating ease of *The Spectator* or of his own paper *The Champion*. Remarks like the following on how to behave on a private visit to a friend's house have prescriptive stiffness that admits no

1750) ed. C.H. Sisson (Cheadle: Carcanet, 1976) 82.

²⁴ *English Satiric Poetry: Dryden to Byron*, ed. James Kinsley and James T. Boulton (London: Arnold, 1966) 19.

²⁵ Pat Rogers. "Classics and Chapbooks" in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* ed. Isobel Rivers (Leicester University Press, 1982) 28-30; and Thomas R. Preston, "Biblical Criticism, literature and the eighteenth-century reader" *ibid.* 97.

²⁶ Pope. *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated in Poems of Alexander Pope* (London: Methuen, 1965) 617, lines 119-20.

discussion: "Never refuse any Thing offered you out of Civility, unless in Preference of a Lady..." or, "If Conveniency allows your staying longer than the Time proposed, may be civil to offer to depart, lest your Stay may be incommodious to your Friend."²⁷ The formality of style sits uneasily with a middle-class reader whose driving force in most spheres of experience was not authoritarian but an openness to experiment, observation and self-reliance. When Moll Flanders pleads in the words of the Bible, "Give not poverty lest I steal," she is speaking from a context that knows limitations of a prescriptive morality.²⁸

This is not to say that Fielding was attempting something in the *Essay* that had fallen out of favour. Leland Warren estimates that the period between 1650 and 1800 saw the publication of "more than fifty works given wholly or in large part to the subject (conversation)—many of which passed through a number of editions."²⁹ They tended to fall into two types, as Ann Kelly notes, either books of discussion and advice on conversation, or guide-books full of examples of what to say on particular occasions; these latter sometimes appeared as exemplary dialogues.³⁰ D'Ortigue's *L'Art de plaire dans la conversation* (1688), which was translated into English several times and much admired by Chesterfield, had appeared as recently as 1736 in an enlarged and annotated edition by Ozell.³¹ Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversazione* (1574) was published in London in 1738 as *The Art of Conversation*, as was John Constable's *The Conversation of Gentlemen considered in most of the Ways that make their Mutual Company Agreeable or Disagreeable*. In that same year Swift published his *Polite Conversation* which included the ironic exposure of politeness posing as intelligence. As he remarks, "when this happy art of polite conversing shall be thoroughly improved, good company will be no longer pestered with dull, dry, tedious storytellers, nor brangling disputers."³² Swift was sceptical that his acquaintances would ever achieve good breeding, but he found its absence very tiresome. The need for some kind of conduct-book was obvious; the question was, would it make any difference? That begged another question, what kind of conduct-book?

Perhaps the most influential factor Fielding faced was that scepticism about good conduct was rife. The man of good-breeding, particularly men at court and the gentry, had taken such a beating in the caricatures of Pope,

²⁷ *Essay* 131.

²⁸ Defoe. *Moll Flanders* (London: Zodiac Press, 1962) 182.

²⁹ Warren, *op. cit.*, 66.

³⁰ Ann Kline Kelly. "Swift's *Polite Conversation*: an Eschatological Vision" *Studies in Philology*, 73 (1976) 204-5.

³¹ *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation...*, 2 vols. (London, 1736).

³² Swift. "Polite Conversation" in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift* ed. Temple Scott, 12 vols. (London: Bell, 1907) XI 220.

Swift and Gay that his credibility had been thoroughly undermined. From Dryden's Zimri, the second Duke of Buckingham —“chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon”³³—to Pope's Lord Hervey, that bug “that stinks and stings,”³⁴ the upper classes were open targets for ridicule. Praise came sparingly and only to exceptions, like John Kyrle, the Man of Ross, or Lord Chesterfield. The heroes in the *Dunciad* who come to participate in the games organised by the Queen of Dulness are described as

A motley mixture ! in long wigs, in bags,
In silks, in capes, in Garters, and in rags.³⁵

The cause of good breeding is lost long before Great Anarch lets the curtain fall on these upper-class nonentities. Pope wrote to Allen in 1742, “My heart is sick of this bad world... if there were to be Another Deluge, I protest I don't know more than one Noah...”³⁶ Any argument that conduct-books had been democratised in the early eighteenth-century from the nobility to the merchants and tradesmen has to take into account the cynical rejoinder that the lower classes had seen through the smokescreen of good manners offered by the gentlemen. In *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) ‘good breeding’ means to the Peachums and Lockits imitating the manners and conversation of the upper classes in order to add gentility to the life of a rogue. As the Beggar remarks at the end, “it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen.”³⁷ This climate of cynicism where vice rather than courtesy was the prevailing art had changed little, as Hogarth's prints show, since the days of *Hudibras* (1663). The world into which Joseph Andrews and Parson Adams stepped was indeed hostile to Fielding's notions of man “as an Animal formed for and delighting in Society.” A modern critic asks, “How could spontaneous natural ‘social affections’, or benevolence, be an adequate guide to moral conduct amidst the calculated fraud and deceit of society ?”³⁸ However Fielding seems to have been determined to provide just such a guide, and we have to presume that at first he believed the *Essay* would make a difference because, as he remarks early on, it is a scandal that there is no guide to this important subject and “so few (are) capable of judging, or rightly pursuing

³³ Dryden. *Absalom and Achitophel* line 550.

³⁴ Pope. *Epistle to Arbuthnot* line 310.

³⁵ Pope. *The Dunciad* II, lines 21-22.

³⁶ Pope to Allen (? 1 December 1742), in *Letters of Alexander Pope*, selected and edited by John Butt (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 370.

³⁷ Gay. *The Beggar's Opera* ed. Peter E. Lewis (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1973) 112.

³⁸ John K. Sherrieff. *The Good-Natured Man* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1982) 92.

their own Happiness.”³⁹

But as Locke remarked of children, manners “are rather to be learned by example than rules.”⁴⁰ One alternative to a conduct-book was a fiction in which Fielding’s notion of good-breeding would expose the pretensions and vanity of the upper and lower classes, not as Swift had done in his *Polite Conversation* by mimicking them, but in a narrative “hitherto unattempted.”⁴¹ Hogarth had hinted how this might be achieved in sequences like *The Rake’s Progress* (1735), and *Before and After* (1736). One of Fielding’s earliest critics complimented him for avoiding the conventional ways of trying to reform his readers, that is to ‘lecture’ or ‘ridicule.’⁴² Fielding, writing in praise of Hogarth, argues that his own alternative means not a repetition of the satiric techniques of Pope or Swift, particularly burlesque, but a cultivation of the comic.⁴³ The key figure in the novel is Parson Abraham Adams whose behaviour exemplifies the principles of the *Essay*. As Fielding says in the closing paragraph of that work:

Whoever, from the Goodness of his Disposition or Understanding, endeavours to his utmost to cultivate the Good-humour and Happiness of others, and to contribute to the Ease and Comfort of all his Acquaintance, however low in Rank Fortune may have placed him, or however clumsy he may be in his Figure or Demeanour, hath, in the truest Sense of the Word, a Claim to Good-Breeding.⁴⁴

The ageing parson, naive if not clumsy, “low in Rank” as well as fortune, with twenty-three pounds a year and “a little encumbered with a wife and six children,”⁴⁵ is described as “generous, friendly, and brave to an excess; but simplicity was his characteristick.”⁴⁶ He is a latter day Sir Calidore out of *The Fairie Queene*, caring of Joseph and Fanny, strong and courageous, courteous and benevolent to all whom he meets. As Calidore one night rushes to the cries of a lady, “lamenting her unluckie strife” at the hands of a murderer, so Adams hurries through the dark with his crabstick to rescue

³⁹ *Essay* 124.

⁴⁰ Locke. *Thoughts Concerning Education* in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. John W. Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922) 46.

⁴¹ Preface of *Joseph Andrews* (London: Dent, 1962) xxii. Further on Fielding as innovator see Jerry C. Beasley. *Novels of the 1740s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982) 20-21.

⁴² *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding* (1751), ed. Alan D. McKillop, Augustan Reprint Society, n° 95 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1962) 15.

⁴³ Preface, *Joseph Andrews*, xviii.

⁴⁴ *Essay* 152.

⁴⁵ *Joseph Andrews*, 5. Further on Fielding’s praise of clergymen see *The Champion*, (29 March, 5, 12, 19 April, 1740).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Fanny from being raped.⁴⁷ Even though the context in which Adams displays his good breeding is far removed from romance and indeed from the drawing-rooms and dinners of upper middle-class society his actions and words exemplify what Spenser calls the 'noble courage' and 'courteous manners' so respected in the English courtesy tradition.⁴⁸

The change from the *Essay* to the novel is not simply that Fielding has moved the precepts of good-breeding from the reflective confines of his sick-bed or his study to the highways and inns of provincial England. The canvas has become much wider, more detailed and dramatic. Adams is always civil, but if that is not reciprocated—which frequently happens—he does not hesitate to clarify his moral stance and if necessary to physically fight for it. When for example the inn-keeper tells his wife to attend to the company from the coach instead of nursing Joseph's sore leg, Adams expresses his horror at this sign of inhumanity. When the inn-keeper then tries to throw Joseph out, Adams "dealt him so sound a compliment over his face with his fist, that the blood immediately gushed out of his nose in a stream."⁴⁹

It might be argued that Adams, in keeping with the satirists, spends more time opposing incivility than displaying the virtues of good breeding. An important innovation however is that in the novel courtesy and discourtesy interact. The rightness of Adams' cause and its eventual triumph are evident in his engagement with a society that has lost sight of the positive humane values which Fielding regards as embedded in the notion of good breeding. Fielding would agree with the satirists that society has reached a low moral ebb. In a sense the time for conduct-books or even ridicule is over: what is needed is an active example, a character like Adams who has the courage to enact his belief that man is a sociable and humane creature, admittedly in a hostile world, who finds his pleasure and purpose in serving his fellow men.

Lady Booby is the opposite. A neat summary of her type is given in the penultimate paragraph of the *Essay*:

Every person who indulges his Ill-nature or Vanity, at the Expense of others; and in introducing Uneasiness, Vexation, and Confusion into Society, however exalted or high-titled he may be, is thoroughly ill-bred.⁵⁰

Lady Booby has attempted all this on Joseph, largely because, as a chap-book version of the Joseph story puts it, "his mistress on him cast her lustful eyes."⁵¹ First she attempted gentle seduction, and later plotted to

⁴⁷ Spenser. *Faerie Queene* VI, viii, 48 in *Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser* ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1952) 374.

⁴⁸ Spenser. *Faerie Queene*, VI, 3. i, 347.

⁴⁹ *Joseph Andrews* 85.

⁵⁰ *Essay* 152.

⁵¹ *The History of Joseph and His Brethren in Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century*, ed.

have her rival Fanny removed from the parish. She, along with Beau Didapper, exactly fit the description in the *Essay* of the lowest class on the moral ladder, "those two Disgracers of the human Species, common called a Beau, and a Fine Lady."⁵² The comedy surrounding them is coloured by a moral condemnation which the eighteenth-century reader would be familiar with from, for example, the sermons of Tillotson: "Intemperance and sensuality and fleshly lusts do debase men's minds, and clog their spirits, make them gross and foul..."⁵³

Adams' conversation with Trulliber demonstrates that Adams occupies rather than describes a moral space: here innocence and hypocrisy interact, and the theological issues dividing faith from works, Fielding from Richardson, and Whitefield from *The Whole Duty of Man* are played out, with Adams often at the centre of the drama.⁵⁴ That incident is the climax to Adams' insistence that Christian charity is a matter for action not just talk; as he says to Trulliber, "whoever... is void of charity, I make no scruple of pronouncing that he is no Christian."⁵⁵ Adams is a moral presence who, in a string of dramatic confrontations between virtue and vice, gives lessons by example on how to handle the pretensions of the world. The novel releases Fielding from the prescriptive manner of his conduct-book into a freer ranging discourse where characters act out the conflict between precept and practice.

Fielding makes less obvious attempts in *Tom Jones* or *Amelia* to create exemplary figures of good conduct, nor indeed does it seem conduct-books on conversation or good breeding continued to be published as frequently in the mid-century as in the earlier decades. Catherine Green has argued that after Richardson women writers from Lennox to Austen used the novel as a conduct-book, "a means of identifying women's issues and solving women's problems."⁵⁶ Yet *Joseph Andrews* illustrates that Fielding too saw such possibilities for the novel in preference to the conventional conduct-book. The *Essay on Conversation* can be read as a guide to the general principles of good breeding which inform *Joseph Andrews*, but more tantalising is the possibility that Fielding, realising the restrictions inherent in the mode of the *Essay*, turned to the novel as a more open kind of discourse in which to express his perceptions of what kind of person a man of good conduct might be.

John Ashton, foreword by Victor Neuberg (New York: Kelly, 1970) 12.

⁵² *Essay* 140.

⁵³ Tillotson. "The Advantage of Religion to Particular Persons" in *The English Sermon*, II 194.

⁵⁴ H. Goldberg. *The Art of Joseph Andrews* (University of Chicago Press, 1969) 163; see also James E. Evans, *passim*.

⁵⁵ *Joseph Andrews* 127.

⁵⁶ See Catherine Sobra Green, *op. cit.*

PART THREE

THE GENTLEMAN AND THE MAN OF TASTE

GEORGES LAMOINE
LORD CHESTERFIELD'S *LETTERS*
AS CONDUCT-BOOKS

Apart from those who lived by their pen and compiled conduct-books among other titles, or those who wished to oblige their contemporaries with a useful knowledge of good breeding and etiquette, more famous writers thought the subject worth their attention as early as the reign of Queen Anne: Steele, Addison, J. Swift. Like all authors who said anything about the usual 'intercourse between one man and another' ¹, they agreed on the necessity of good-breeding, of manners and politeness, these terms being used as perfect synonyms by the Doctor himself in his *Dictionary*.

I would like to show here that a few decades later, among other famous texts, Chesterfield's *Letters* ² can be considered as handbooks of conduct. We must feel grateful to Mrs. Stanhope for editing the deceased nobleman's correspondence, and it is just over a century that the Earl of Carnarvon edited the letters sent to his godson, Philip Stanhope. ³

Several characteristics still make these two books very different from any other conduct-book. The first one was written by an ever affectionate and often anxious father to a son whom social conventions prevented from being brought up as Chesterfield's son ⁴, and who was away from his father most of the time. When the second Philip Stanhope became the adopted son, the same care was given to his education. These letters were then to make Philip an earl and the successor of Chesterfield. In both cases they were strictly private, and were neither intended nor prepared for publication. Secondly, they were written by one of the first noblemen of the century, who had been a diplomat, a statesman, a Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland, who had

¹ S. Johnson. *The Rambler*. 8th ed., 4 vols. (London: Bowyer, Strahan, J. & F. Rivington & alii, 1771) II, 238-9, 23 Feb. 1751; see *The Spectator* n° 119, *The Tatler* n° 204, etc.; J. Swift, *Treatise on Good Manners & Good Breeding* (1754); *Hints on Good Manners* (1765), in *Prose Works*, vol. IV, ed. H. Davis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957). Dr Johnson, *The Rambler*, n° 98 (23 Feb. 1758).

² *Letters to his Son Philip Stanhope, together with Several other Pieces on Various Subjects, published by Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope*. 2 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1774). Quoted hereafter as *L I*.

³ *Letters to his Godson and successor*. ed. the Earl of Carnarvon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890). Quoted hereafter as *L II*.

⁴ *L I*, 22. 9. 1749: 'my anxiety for your perfection is so great' 6 June 1751: 'Solicitous and anxious as I have ever been to form your heart, your mind, and your manners...'

travelled extensively, and known all the élite and polite society of Europe, and who was a fine scholar. Thirdly, in both cases, these letters were written with a view to make a young boy into an accomplished young gentleman, and in the case of the son, to prepare him for an important post in diplomacy.⁵ Therefore the sort of education contemplated was no ordinary one. The letters touch on nearly every possible subject, including some that go much beyond what is included in the word 'education.'

Although the first letters written by Chesterfield were sent out in 1738, when the boy was 6, and the last one dated 1765, both collections will be considered as one unity, for convenience's sake. The main difference between the two is that the second series was composed by an ageing man who had retired from public life and lost the only son and child he ever had. Because he took up the task of educating his successor, inevitable repetitions can be found in both books. One may perhaps feel more often the father's affection in the letters sent to his son, his successor being only a distant cousin. The main distinction to be made would be in the future career intended for the son, since he had to make a name and a reputation for himself.⁶

What did education consist of ? Undoubtedly, it was Chesterfield's own idea of what his son and heir should be, in private and public life. There is no real predetermined plan developed to be found; subjects were treated either as they came to the earl's mind, or as they resulted from questions or answers from the boys, or from their meetings, or again from reports he received on the progress of his pupils. If the *Letters* had been written with a mercenary view, the book title could have been something like 'A valuable compendium of all the matters contained in every other conduct-book for gentlemen.' In this paper it is impossible to treat the matter as fully as it deserves, and I can only offer a selection of subjects.

The first ingredient mentioned is a knowledge of classical history and mythology. Then comes behaviour in society. And the model to be followed was the French fashion. Chesterfield insists on this several times, comparing French and English manners:

For this, you should observe the French people who excel in it, and whose politeness seems as easy and natural as any other part of their conversation; whereas the English are often awkward in their civilities...⁷

He even goes as far as to write:

⁵ L I, 497, n° 181: 'Your business is negotiation abroad, and oratory in the House of Commons at home.' L. 2, 14, n° 192.: 'You cannot conceive what advantages it will give you, in your negotiations, to possess Italian, German, and French, perfectly...'

⁶ S. M. Brewer. *Design for a Gentleman*. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1963), 9: 'in English law, as now, the rights of a bastard were only those he could acquire: civilly he could inherit nothing, but he might get a surname by reputation although he had none by inheritance.'

⁷ L.I, 1, 137, n° 55.

I have often said, and do think, that a Frenchman, who, with a fund of virtue, learning, and good sense, had the manners and good-breeding of his country, is the perfection of human nature.⁸

The first element to possess is decency, "which in French is *bienséance* necessary to gain the approbation of mankind,"⁹ although no early definition or example is given. Only in a letter of June 13th 1751 will the father explain:

Les bienséances are a most necessary part of the knowledge of the world. They consist in the relations of persons, things, time, and place; good sense points them out, good company perfects them,...and good policy recommend them. In short, les bienséances are another word for *manners*, and extend to every part of life.¹⁰

This gives an interesting insight into Chesterfield's method: instil a small element into the boy's mind, have him test it by rubbing himself with the world, and deduct the usefulness of it. The stress is laid with much more emphasis on politeness and good-breeding, two terms often recurrent under Chesterfield's pen: "politeness and good-breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life."¹¹ This is explained by a simple argument: "The lowest and the poorest people in the world, expect good-breeding from a gentleman, and they have a right to it." (L. II, 14). The same leit-motiv follows immediately: "*Ayez seulement de la Politesse, de la Douceur, et des attentions, et je vous réponds que vous serez aimé, et d'autant plus que les Anglois ne sont pas généralement aimables,*" this being repeated in the same terms one year later (L. II, 93).

Manners, then, are given several exemplary definitions. As early as 1740 young Philip is told that "the perfection of good-breeding is, to be civil with ease, and in a gentlemanlike manner." (L. I, 137, n° 55) In 1748 'gentleness of manners' is explained by 'an engaging address, and an insinuating behaviour' (when insinuating had a positive sense) (L. I, 278, n° 115), to which we may add 'a genteel carriage and a graceful manner of presenting yourself.' (L. I, 300, n° 122) One year later, the father wrote: "By *manières*, I do not mean bare common civility (...) but I mean engaging, insinuating, shining manners; a distinguished politeness; an almost irresistible address; a superior gracefulness in all you say and do." (L. I, 1, 407-8, n° 148). All this is summed up in the formula: "*Les manières nobles et aisées, la tournure d'un homme de condition, le ton de la bonne compagnie, les Graces, le je-ne-sçais-quoi qui plait.*" (L. I, 464, n° 163).

One of the difficulties is that Chesterfield associates manners, good-

⁸ L. I, 1, 210, n° 86.

⁹ L. I, 1, 74, n° 23.

¹⁰ L. I, 2, 164 n° II/39.

¹¹ L. I, vol. 2, 167, II/39.

breeding, ease, without really explaining what each of these terms consisted in. What comes nearest to a definition of good-breeding is to be found in letter 168, "the result of much good-sense, some good nature, and a little self-denial for the sake of others, and with a view to obtain the same indulgence from others." But this does not lead very far, for the use of quantitative determiners results in limits as uncertain as the definition itself. Only in 1763 did he develop the difference between '*mœurs & manières*':

Les Mœurs veulent dire une certaine décence, un decorum, une bienséance, dans la conduite et en tout ce qu'on fait, et en tout ce qu'on dit dans le commerce ordinaire du monde. Par exemple un homme qui a des mœurs ne jure pas, ne s'enivre pas, ne joue pas, et ne donne aucun sujet de scandale.... Après les Mœurs viennent les Manières, qui sont aussi nécessaires pour se faire aimer, que les Mœurs le sont pour se faire respecter. Il faut que vos manières soient douces et obligeantes, et jusqu'au geste et aux regards, tout doit annoncer la douceur. (L. II, 78, n° 60).

As it is most obvious that Chesterfield wished the boys to be perfect gentlemen, his letters enumerate the accomplishments to be acquired. He gave examples of good breeding and ill manners, he wrote about where to obtain the best manners and how to do it. The other aspect was, the knowledge of men and the world in a more general sense. The following enumeration will be artificial, but the matter leaves hardly any other alternative. What were then the boys to learn?

If statistics were available, the main recurrent theme would be, the art of pleasing, being itself subdivided into several elements. The three volumes are permeated with the notions of pleasing, politeness, the Graces, nearly *ad nauseam*. The greatest art is pleasing, and the earl lavishes advice to that end, beginning with:

However trifling a genteel manner may sound, it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women, which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing (L I. 1, 145 n° 59).

The earl consciously commits the sin of repetition: "My heart is so set upon your pleasing, and consequently succeeding in the world, that possibly I have already repeated the same things over and over to you." (I, 1, 431) He will do so again with the adopted heir, and more often in French than in English: he evokes "a lesser duty, which I would have you study and observe, that you may be loved by all mankind. I mean the duty of pleasing."¹² The analysis of this duty is followed by this conclusion: "Ce

¹² L. II, 12. See p. 32: 'Souvenez-vous qu'il ne faut négliger aucun des moyens de plaire, c'est le grand article dans le commerce du monde'; II, 93: 'Il n'y a rien que je souhaite plus que de vous voir posséder au suprême degré, le Grand Art de Plaire'; see also 122, 125: 'je reviens toujours à mes Moutons, c'est à dire à la Necessité et aux Moyens de Plaire'; 166: 'The desire of being pleased is universal, the desire of pleasing should be so

n'est pas assez d'être Estimable et respectable, mais il faut nécessairement être Aimable... Quel plaisir a un cœur bien fait de plaire ! " (p. 12)

The art of pleasing is made up of rules of politeness and behaviour, examples of which are sometimes quoted, either positive or negative. In Letter 55 (I, 1, 136) the earl is encouraged to give some rules of politeness and good-breeding, being persuaded that the boy will observe them. Good sense must determine the young man's conduct for what is good for one case may not be so for another. The earl will give "some general rules...that hold always true, and in all cases." The form of addressing different persons is the first example quoted; one must not answer yes or no without adding the title of the person spoken to. Examples of rude behaviour at table are described in Letters 55 and 59, particularly of the results of inattention at dinner¹³. In an imaginary dialogue a lady of quality teaches the young man what to do. Thus does he learn not to put his elbows on the table, not to eat too large morsels, not to use his knife instead of his fork, etc. (II 44-45). The whole books are full of such advice scattered *passim*: do not pick your teeth, do not put your knife into your mouth, do not pick your nose or scratch your ear. Chesterfield also insists on the need for hygiene and bodily cleanliness, and the energetic brushing of teeth.

Other elements are detailed, that make the gentleman: dress comes first. Chesterfield concedes that the finery of dress is a superficial image of man, but it must be attended to: "dress is a very foolish thing; and yet it is very foolish for a young man not to be well dressed, according to his rank and way of life." (I, 1, 74; see II, 132-4, on the same subject) Therefore he wrote, "Pray be not only well-dressed, but shining in your dress; let it have *du brillant* ... by the taste and fashion of it." (I, 1, 488) When in Paris, young Stanhope is expected to cut as fine a figure as any other young man: "Are you be-laced, be-powdered, and be-feathered, as other young fellows are, and should be ? At your age, *il faut du brillant*..."¹⁴ Chesterfield expects his son to hold a certain rank, and to conform to the canons of fashion. This is supported by the suggestion written in 1747: "It will be of very little purpose for you to frequent good company, if you do not conform to, and learn, their manners." (I, 1, 220) Therefore the earl wrote "to a fine gentleman, in a scarlet coat, laced with gold, a brocade waistcoat, and all other suitable ornaments." (I, 1, 214). Thus attired, the young man learnt to

too...'; 294-95: '*Le grand Art de Plaire* vaut bien tous les autres Arts.' It is not certain that all occurrences were quoted here.

¹³ L. I, 1, 136-37; 145-47; 353-54 insists on conversation, on the art of telling stories, of being discreet, etc.

¹⁴ I, 1, 550. See also I, 383: 'A man of sense carefully avoids any particular character in his dress; he is accurately clean for his own sake; but all the rest is for other people's'

dance, under the tuition of a French master, M. Desnoyers; he was probably taught how to move in drawing-rooms too:

I desire you will particularly attend to the graceful motion of your arms; which, with the manners of putting on your hat, and giving your hand, is all that a gentleman need attend to. Dancing is in itself a very trifling silly thing; but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform... ¹⁵

The love of music is approved, as long as the boy is content with attending concerts, operas; but he is strongly discouraged from becoming a fiddler or of playing the flute himself, this not becoming a gentleman (I, 1, 407).

Another aspect of the boys' education was the mastering of their mother tongue, both in spoken and written English. As early as the age of seven, young Stanhope was being persuaded of the absolute necessity of mastering "Oratory, or the art of speaking well; which should never be entirely out of your thoughts, since it is so useful in every part of life..." (I, 1, 96) This letter is entirely devoted to the definition and use of oratory, for a person intended for Parliament. Letter 171 takes up the subject of 'Style, the dress of thoughts,' with an example of a letter written as a caricature of 'an illiberal and inelegant style.' Letter 163 associates 'a vulgar, ordinary way of thinking, acting, or speaking' with 'a low education and a habit of low company.' Therefore Philip should avoid 'vulgarism in language,' bad pronunciation changing 'earth' into 'yearth,' the use of fashionable words such as 'vastly.' Moreover, "A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms; ... but takes great care to speak very correctly and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies." ¹⁶ Letters 59 and 60 of Vol. I. contain examples of "awkwardness of expression and words most carefully to be avoided." To speak properly is not enough:

Car il est très important de savoir bien écrire des lettres; on en a besoin tous les jours dans le commerce de la vie, soit pour les affaires, soit pour le plaisir, et l'on ne pardonne qu'aux Dames des fautes d'orthographe et de style. (I, 1, 26).

In a letter of October 1739, Chesterfield insists on the use of rhetoric, one being never too young to think of it; he repeats nearly *verbatim* the contents of the last-mentioned letter (I, 1, 187-88). The future fifth earl was also told, "*Il y a un langage bas et vulgaire du peuple, dont il n'est pas permis à un honnête homme de se servir. Il faut qu'il parle plus élégamment, et d'un meilleur ton.*" This letter also contains Chesterfield's remark, that *un honnête homme* in French is "oftener a Gentleman, and a well-bred man,

¹⁵ I, 1, 182.

¹⁶ I, 1, 463 sq.

than an honest man.”¹⁷

All this should enable a young man to shine in polite circles, particularly in that pleasant pastime, conversation, “a subject that well deserves your utmost attention”, for “men are and will be judged of according to the part they act in conversation...” where “Time, place, characters, and propriety are strictly to be observed.”¹⁸ Whatever the circumstances, the young man is advised to use flattery, dissimulation if necessary, which is probably not a positive aspect, but the main recommendation is: “Make yourself absolute master... of your temper and your countenance—so far, at least, as that no visible change do appear in either, whatever you may feel inwardly.”¹⁹

A number of other qualities or accomplishments should be possessed, quoted here as they were interspersed in the *Letters*: “*Pour être parfaitement honnête homme, il ne suffisoit pas d’être juste; mais... la générosité, et la grandeur d’ame, alloient plus loin.*” (I, 69) A definition of virtue shows some selfishness in its aim: “Virtue consists in doing good, and in speaking truth; the effects of it are advantageous to all mankind, and to one’s self in particular...” (I, 1, 154) A gentleman should always keep his word, the contrary being “a folly, a dishonour and a crime...truth being the first duty of religion and morality.” (I, 1, 183) If he breaks his word, he becomes in French a ‘faquin a nazardes.’ (II, 82)

Whatever the criticism levelled at the earl after his *Letters* were published, Chesterfield took care to teach his successive pupils the necessity of morals and religion. In Letter 180 the earl admits,

I have seldom or never written to you on the subject of Religion and Morality: your own reason, I am persuaded, has given you true notions of both; they speak best for themselves...(I, 1, 553-4).

He advised his son to decline joining free-thinkers or those who laugh at religion, to which he adds the wish that the boy may keep his moral character ‘immaculate, unblemished, unsullied.’ He reminded his adopted heir that he had a duty to God and man: “the duty he expects from us; which is adoration and thanksgiving, and doing all the good we can to our fellow-creatures.” (II, 11). The latter aspect is quoted again as: “*Aimez votre espèce en général, et plaignez ceux qui ne méritent pas d’être aimés, c’est à dire les méchants, mais ne les maltraitez jamais.*” (II, 106) Later on he insists on the duty of charity: “Humanity inclines, religion requires, and our moral

¹⁷ II, 17, n° 14. This a capital quotation to help translate ‘gentilhomme’ and ‘gentleman.’ In another letter we find ‘un galant homme.’ (I, 2, 316) See also II, 139 n° 106: ‘though it is very usefull and becoming to a gentleman to speak several languages well, it is most absolutely necessary for him to speak his own native language correctly and elegantly, not to be laughed at in every company.’

¹⁸ II, 293; II, 93, for further advice in French on conversation.

¹⁹ I, 1, 420.

duty obliges us to relieve, as far as we are able, the distresses and miseries of our fellow creatures.” (II, 167) *A propos* of the diverging views of Rome and the Church of England, Chesterfield wished his son to be tolerant; errors, he wrote, were to be pitied if they were sincere, but not to be laughed at or punished. It is unjust to persecute, and absurd to ridicule people for their opinions since “every man seeks for truth; but God only knows who has found it.” (I, 1, 222) When his son was in Italy, in Rome particularly, the earl induced him to go to mass, writing that “a *complaisance* due to the custom of the place [was] by no means, an implied approbation of their doctrines.” (I, 1 462). Was all this to be taken as a sign of toleration, or of an absence of personal faith ?

The finishing touch of the personal aspect of the boys’ education was what Chesterfield called ‘the Graces,’ and on which he insisted very often. They were believed to be the perfection of good manners, and the examples proposed by the earl were the famous duke of Marlborough, whose manners he thought superior to any other Gentleman’s of the time, the French duc de Nivernois, the earl of Huntingdon, Sir Charles Hotham, and Lady Hervey. Therefore the earl every now and then reminded his pupils to ‘sacrifice to the Graces’ (I, 1, 267), thus defined: “A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this *je ne sais quoi*, that always pleases.” (p. 268) Letter 106 contains a long development on the subject, but without the above definition (p. 248). Then he repeats, “Remember there is another great object that must keep pace with, and accompany, knowledge; I mean, Manners, Politeness, and the Graces; ...I repeat and shall never cease repeating to you, *the Graces, the Graces.*” (I, 1, 405) Another letter suggests that Philip should attend the salon of Lady Hervey when in Dijon; to his cousin Philip the earl wrote in the same trend : “*Le Grand Art, et le plus nécessaire de tous, c’est l’Art de Plaire. Sacrifiez toujours aux Graces.*” (II, 119, & 117) So far then the two boys were instructed in personal qualifications and accomplishments. There remained to acquire what society only could give, the polish that came from rubbing shoulders with others and the world.

As the two correspondents were intended to shine, the former abroad as a diplomat, the latter as the earl of Chesterfield at the court of St James’s, the best schools were courts themselves,²⁰ although by 1750 he sounded no longer so enthusiastic about courts: one will find there the best and the worst of everything, he writes in a rather disenchanted tone.²¹ And indeed

²⁰ I, 292: ‘You are the only one I ever knew, of this country, whose education was, from the beginning, calculated for the department of foreign affairs’; I, 443: ‘Courts are unquestionably the seats of Politeness and Good-breeding’; I, 469: ‘Every thing is best at Capitals, the best Masters, the best companies, and the best manners.’

²¹ I, 2, 32-33: ‘In all courts you must expect to meet with connections without friendship,

the son went abroad, spent a number of months, or more rapidly visited, Switzerland (against the father's advice), Germany (Mayence, Hanover, Berlin, Hamburg, Mannheim, Munich, etc), Italy (Venice, Florence, Naples, Rome), and Paris, according to the tradition of the Grand Tour. But it was far more than just that. On his way, young Stanhope was expected to fill his memory with all the information he could get at first hand on towns and countries, peoples and institutions. The father's advice was thus worded: "Your destination is the great and busy world; your immediate object is the affairs, the interests, and the history, the constitutions, the customs, the manners of Europe." (I, 1, 198) Three years later Philip was reminded that he was "sent abroad to see the manners and characters, and learn the language, of foreign countries." (I, 1, 520) He had to write and send in reports on political situations, he acquired information on peace treaties and standing armies, on the governments of the places he visited. In all this he apparently satisfied his father. Letter 93, dated 7 August 1747, recommends "to inform yourself, if there be any particular customs or forms to be observed, that you may not commit mistakes." And Chesterfield explains the fashion of the Austrian, French, English and Spanish courts (I, 1, 222). A gentleman should take local customs into consideration, according to the proverb about Romans: "A man of sense... carefully attends to the local manners of the respective places where he is, and takes for his models those persons whom he observes to be at the head of the fashion and good-breeding." (I, 1, 487-8) This was repeated in 1751 both in French first and in English:

*Ne vous en laissez pas imposer par la mode, ni par des cliques que vous pourrez fréquenter; ... tout ceci n'empêche pas que vous ne deviez pas vous conformer extérieurement aux modes et aux tons des différentes compagnies où vous vous trouverez.*²²

The company where both boys were to learn, but neither really to shine hereafter, is admittedly difficult to define, but the earl explains:

Good company is what respective sets of company are pleased either to call or think themselves, but it is that company which all the people of the place call and acknowledge to be good company, notwithstanding some objections which they may form to some of the individuals who compose it. It consists chiefly (but by no means without exception) of people of considerable birth, rank, and character (I, 1, 348).

But Chesterfield admits that commoners of merit are often to be found and

enemies without hatred, honour without virtue, appearances saved, and realities sacrificed; good manners, with bad morals; and all vice and virtue so disguised...

²² I, 2, 68. Again, 87: 'and when hereafter you will be at other courts, do the same thing there, and conform to the fashionable manners and usage of the place; that is, what the French are not apt to do...'

admitted into the best company, together with people who “intrude into it by their own forwardness, or by the protection of important persons.” In 1765 a similar definition was sent to the young cousin and heir, less aristocratic and more vague in its delineation of “those who are universally allowed to be, and called, *good company*.”²³

As the earl knew men and society, he also knew that the final touch was to be acquired in the company of, and with the help of, women of fashion. Therefore he devoted a number of letters to the subject, advising his son then his adopted son to be particularly careful to please ladies. When young Philip is in Germany, the father writes twice to go to the Duchess of Courland, for “the company of women of fashion will improve your manners, though not your understanding; and that complaisance and politeness, which are so useful in men’s company, can only be acquired in women’s.” He adds in his following epistle, that this company “certainly polishes the manners, and gives *une certaine tournure*.” (I, 1, 247-50) Other letters harp on the same string: “As women are a considerable, or at least a pretty numerous part, of company; and as their suffrages go a great way towards establishing a man’s character in the fashionable part of the world..., it is necessary to please them.” (I, 1, 330-31. He adds that women are “a numerous and loquacious body; their hatred would be more prejudicial than their friendship can be advantageous to you.” Although this may sound somewhat utilitarian and discourteous, the earl knew human nature well.²⁴ The next formula seems to be borrowed from some treatise of alchemy: “*Les femmes sont les véritables raffineuses de l’or masculin; elles n’y ajoutent pas du poids, il est vrai; mais elles y donnent de l’éclat et le brillant*.” (I, 2, 129) Younger Philip is complimented for his politeness to a lady who predicts that he will be a gentleman; at a month’s distance the earl wrote the imaginary dialogue with a lady of quality, whose task it is to ‘polish’ (in French, *décrotter*) the young man (II, 39 & 44-5). Therefore the father asks the boy on 25 January 1750, “Have you found a good *décrotteuse* ? ” (I, 1, 548) We also discover that the polishing of a young man included ‘conversation’ with women, not necessarily criminal. There is a time for study, and a time for pleasures. There are many references to fashionable ladies’ drawing-rooms in every important place, and when Philip is in Italy and in France, more direct allusion is made to affairs, described as ‘*arrangement*’ and ‘*attachement*.’ ‘*Arrangement*’ is ‘in plain English a gallantry,’ for which the earl recommends the boy to see but ladies of

²³ II, 173: ‘Good company consists of a number of people of a certain fashion (I do not mean birth) where the majority are reckoned to be people of sense and decent character, in short, of those...’

²⁴ I, 1, 422. See II, 176, written in nearly the same words.

fashion : it is a matter of health, education and rank.²⁵ *Attachement* seems to be rather a more sentimental connection, and the earl says by the way, that “l’un n’empêche pas l’autre.” The writer also criticises Lord *** who “need not have been reduced to keep an opera whore in such a place as Paris, where women of fashion serve as volunteers...” Honni soit... If all sorts of pleasures are quite acceptable: dancing, opera going, innocent games, after six hours’ study every morning, evenings “should be employed at assemblies, balls, *spectacles*, and in the best companies”—this letter giving another imaginary dialogue between Stanhope the studious boy, and an Englishman intent on the pursuit of low pleasures, wasting time on breakfast parties and refusing to listen to any tutor (I, 1, 450 sq). Philip is warned against the danger of becoming a Man of Pleasure, such as his father describes it: “a beastly drunkard, an abandoned whoremaster, and a profligate swearer and curser.” (I, 1, 211) Chesterfield enumerates the pleasures he should indulge in if he were to begin the world again, with the experience he now has of it (212). They are all rational ones, controlled by decency. Early in February 1750 he enquires into the boy’s occupations, wishes he may taste his pleasures, asks in French whether he has seduced some proud *Princesse*, and concludes: “Though I am a severe censor of vice and folly, I am a friend and advocate for pleasures, and will contribute all in my power to yours.” (I, 1, 554) But he depicts a drunkard as “un animal, un Cochon qui ne merite pas le nom d’un homme, puisqu’il avilit et degrade la nature humaine.” (II, 29) Letter 13, vol. 2, describes acceptable games and pleasures, and draws the line at whores (and ‘their never-failing consequences, surgeons’) and singers, dancers, actresses, and *id genus omne* ; he gives an interesting definition of a rake—probably wider than that applying to Richardson’s Mr. B. To his heir again he describes all the ills human nature is subject to if one lives to excesses (II, 155), after having written a similar catalogue to his son (I, 1, 206 sq). The whole can be summed up in this sentence: “Remember, that when I speak of pleasures, I always mean the elegant pleasures of a rational being, and not the brutal ones of a swine.” (I, 1, 438) Thus armed in life, there still remained one aspect to be mastered, and not the least: the knowledge of men, either as individuals, or a society.

To a boy approximately 14 years old, the father explains that the knowledge he may get from books is not enough: he must have “the knowledge of the world [which] is to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.” This requires sagacity and discernment: “You must look into

²⁵ I, 2, 22: ‘Un *arrangement* is, at Paris, as necessary a part of a woman of fashion’s establishment, as her home, table, coach, etc. A young fellow must therefore be a very awkward one to be reduced to... prefer drabs and danger to a commerce (in the course of the world not disgraceful) with a woman of health, education and rank.’

people, as well as at them" in order to find the ruling passions of every man (I, 1, 194). Then the boy is expected to become a "portrait painter of ... the inside of the heart and mind of man... Search therefore, with the greatest care, into the characters, of all whom you converse with; ...this is the true knowledge of the world," he wrote in 1747 (I, 1, 225). One may think of cynicism when the earl writes that men are more often led by their hearts than by their understandings, and they are to be won through the senses (I, 1, 299). This may take time, for it is difficult to get to know men : "Man is a composition of so many and such various ingredients, that it requires both time and care to analyse him," (I, 1, 329) this to induce Philip carefully to observe those he meets in every court. Introspection may also prove useful: "In order to judge of the inside of others, study your own ; for men in general are very much alike." (I, 1, 420) Letter 158 opens on the invitation, "Let us resume our reflections upon men, their characters, their manners; in a word, our reflections upon the world. They may help you to form yourself and to know others." (439) One cannot help seeing there the influence of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*. The lesson is continued with the maxim: "Read men, therefore, yourself; not in books, but in nature. Adopt no systems, but study them yourself" (I, 1, 507), following the wish that "the Characters, the Heads and the Hearts of men are the useful science of which I would have you perfect master." (472) Meeting the great of the world will also be useful, and Philip is expected to attend the king's and the dauphin's *levées* at Versailles, to be introduced to Count Caunitz, the Pope's Nuncio, etc. When the son is twenty, Chesterfield writes that "the world is the book, and the only one to which, at present, I would have you apply yourself." (II, 244) The reflection sent by the new Mentor to his Telemachus is indeed a remarkable one:

Happy the man who, with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble, at an age when most men are the bubbles of the world ! (I, 2, 143).

It is not known whether Philip Stanhope and the fifth earl were masters of the world to such a degree as was wished for them by the father. But among all other topics he mentioned or developed, he also made several comments on education itself. First, he openly told his son that he did not "mean to dictate as a parent, but advise as a friend, and an indulgent one too" (I, 1, 193) when the boy was 14. And indeed he very often addressed the boy as 'My dear Friend.' When the young man was twenty, his father made two points in April and November 1752:

Nineteen fathers in twenty, and every mother who had loved half as well as I do, would have ruined you; whereas I always made you feel the weight of my authority, that you might one day know the force of my love (I, 2, 294).

Such declaration need no further comment. The other example quoted shows all the difference between the spirit of the letters, and another type of education, probably far too often to be met in well-off and aristocratic families:

I long to see Lord and Lady — ... They have ruined their own son by what they called and thought, loving him. They have made him believe that the world was made for him, not he for the world.

This, from such an aristocrat, is in keeping with his advice on the stupidity of boasting of one's birth, or of despising those whom Fortune had placed down below.

Chesterfield was attacked by Dr Johnson, and by William Cowper, who called him 'Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth.' Considering that the earl quoted models of his own youth, that he insisted on the role of Locke (I, 1, 367), his letters reflect the tendencies of a man of the age of Queen Anne, George I and George II, rather than an evolution that might have taken place when America fought for independence. But what the earl denounced as low and vulgar can still be traced in the pages of Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, or even in J. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. His *Letters* reveal standards of conduct, as well as a man. A prejudiced critic could say that the vocabulary concerning manners belonged to a small fraction of society; but the letters the earl wrote were intended for private reading only. It is probably difficult to judge Chesterfield's system; one can at least admit that he spent much time with the boys, even if the education the earl gave the two boys failed in both cases to make them perfect gentlemen, but that is another aspect of the problem. Even if one does not totally agree with Dr Johnson's words told by Boswell: "Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* to his Son, I think, might be made a pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put in the hands of every young gentleman,"²⁶ his opinion shows that the *Letters* were considered as a valuable conduct-book.

²⁶ Boswell. *Life of Johnson*. Everyman, 2 vols.: II, 36.

RÉMY G. SAISSELIN

THE MAN OF TASTE AS SOCIAL MODEL,
OR, 'SENSE AND SENSIBILITY'

In Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne finds that Edward Ferrar's eyes "want all that spirit, that fire, which at once announce virtue and intelligence. And besides all this, I am afraid, mama, he has no real taste. Music seems scarcely to attract him, and though he admires Elinor's drawings very much, it is not admiration of a person who can understand their worth. It is evident, in spite of his frequent attention to her while she draws, that in fact he knows nothing of the matter. He admires as a lover, not as a connoisseur. To satisfy me, those characters must be united." Add to this complaint that Ferrar does not even know how to read Cowper, and we are given a sorry picture indeed.

But Elinor knows better. She answers one must not judge on first impressions. "I have seen a great deal of him, have studied his sentiments and heard his opinions on subjects of literature and taste; and, upon the whole, I venture to pronounce that his mind is well-informed, his enjoyment of books exceedingly great, his imagination lively, his observation just and correct, and his taste delicate and pure."

There is no question in this exchange of Ferrar being or not being a gentleman. That he is one is assumed by author as well as the reader. But it is significant that there is a question as to his having taste. Is he a gentleman and a man of taste, or is he only a gentleman? Marianne sees only a gentleman; Elinor discerns a man of taste. There are two opposed views of taste applied here, one based on sensibility, one based on sense, and one might add, keeping in mind the whole English eighteenth century until the decade before the French Revolution, one feminine and one manly. Marianne expects too much of Ferrar. It is as if she had read Shaftesbury on enthusiasm, neglecting his other essays on matters aesthetic. On the other hand, it is as if Elinor had only read Hume on taste. Or may one add that Marianne tends to confuse taste with the sublime, that she expects a genius where she finds only a man of taste? In any case, the discussion of Ferrar's having or not having taste implies that it is no longer sufficient in 1800 to be only a gentleman to be worth of esteem, admiration, or respect. One must also be a man of taste. If it is still deemed important to have a gentleman's income, one must also be something more than a man of

means; one must possess qualities beyond quantity, one must have more than an estate. One ought to have taste. Why ?

A possible answer might be found in the difference between the continental nobility and the English notion of a gentleman. In his recent book *The English Gentleman*¹ David Castronovo stresses that gentlemen did not constitute a caste but an open class which might be entered by wealth. The number of gentlemen may have remained small, in those times when it was still associated with landed wealth and nobility, but those referred to as gentlemen kept on increasing with the nation's prosperity. In the eighteenth century Fielding could still define 'No Body' as 'All the people in Great Britain except about 1200,' but even in his time there were probably more than 1200, and by Jane Austen's time even more. One may say that the aim of all those who made good in affairs, trade, business, manufacturing, was access to the rank of gentleman, indeed so much so that already by the eighteenth century a further distinction became necessary among gentlemen because of the increased pretensions of wealth. As the author of *The Vale Royal of England* put it in the seventeenth century, "Riches maketh Gentlemen in all countries of England." Tocqueville later summed up his attitude as regards the English aristocracy, which he considered to be founded on wealth, by writing that "The respect paid to wealth in England is enough to make one despair."² An English gentleman then, might be born, might be wealthy, and might have no other accomplishment so that what Figaro said of Count Almaviva might also be said of certain gentlemen, namely that all they ever did was take the trouble to be born. Others took the trouble to make money, and left it at that, having no further distinction. In short one might be a gentleman and yet be ill-mannered, ignorant, and vulgar. Taste became necessary to distinguish qualities superior to the mere rank of gentlemen. Taste served to draw upon itself a certain regard different from that mere respect paid to wealth. One might put it that taste would 'moralize' wealth. One might even say that taste becomes the Protestant's way of making pleasure and beauty acceptable.

There is as regards the man of taste then a necessary element of visibility. Taste may be a matter of sensibility, sense, connoisseurship, education, even morality, but it is also visible. It appeals to the eye of others and distinguishes the look it draws upon itself from the more common and more vulgar gaze turned to wealth. The austerity of the Protestant temple is compensated by the attention paid to art outside the

¹ D. Castronovo. *The English Gentleman*. (New York, 1987).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 16

temple. Mandeville, Adam Smith, Rousseau and many others all insisted on the importance of appearances and the gaze of others:

The rich man glories in his riches, Adam Smith writes, because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go along with in all those agreeable emotions with which the advantage of his situation so readily inspire him. At the thought of this, his heart seems to swell and dilate itself within him, and he is fonder of his wealth, upon this account, than for all the other advantages it procures him. The poor man, on the contrary, is ashamed of his poverty.³

Not only is the poor man ashamed of his poverty; worse, he is non-existent because, as Smith puts it, he is 'out of sight of mankind.' Thus wealth makes visible, and taste will make visible with distinction.

This uncritical admiration of the rich and their riches, which Smith described and deplored, is common and vulgar. Wealth impresses the ignorant and the uneducated. Admiration should be directed to more than wealth; it must be extended to virtue, merit, accomplishment, to use the words of Shaftesbury. Taste will thus become a means of showing virtue and merit quite aside from one's possession of wealth. Taste thus makes wealth socially and morally acceptable by shifting attention from mere luxury to virtue and merit.

Shaftesbury's role in the elaboration of what constitutes a man of taste cannot be underestimated, and one might well refer to his *Characteristics* as a species of courtesy-book since showing taste may be considered a courtesy offered the eye of others. He certainly presents the *virtuoso* as a social model, assigning the artists not only an aesthetic role, but an ethical one; for it is they who "formed their audience; polished the age; refined the public ear, and framed it right; that in return they might be rightly and lastingly applauded."⁴ Nor do artists compromise with or in their art, for they "would choose to lose customers and starve, rather than by a base compliance with the world [...] act contrary to what they call the justness and truth of work."⁵ Thus the true artist, the true *virtuoso*, and thus true gentleman is a man of integrity in whom taste and morality are inseparable. He is also beyond mere personal interest. Taste already with Shaftesbury becomes linked to disinterestedness, just as it becomes distanced from the following of mere fashion: "Wherever there is a want of taste, we generally observe a love of money and cunning; and wherever taste prevails, a want of prudence and an utter disregard to money."⁶ What is not said is that this

³ A. Smith. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. (Oxford U.P., 1976) 51.

⁴ Shaftesbury. *Characteristics*. (London, 1723) I 263-264.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶ Shenstone. *Works*. (London, 1764) II, 318.

independent and disinterested judgment of taste supposes a certain level of wealth because it also assumes that taste is formed by art and education. Shaftesbury knew for whom he was writing and his Platonist aesthetics supposes a non-Platonic, shall we say Aristotelian, level of income which allows not only the education of a gentleman but his further refinement into a man of taste:

One who aspires to the character of a man of breeding and politeness, is careful to form his judgment of arts and sciences upon right models of perfection. If he travels to Rome, he enquires which are the truest pieces of architecture, the best remains of statues, the best paintings of a Raphael or a Carache. However antiquated, rough or dismal they may appear to him, at first sight; he resolves to view them over and over, till he has brought himself to relish them, and finds their hidden graces and perfections. He takes particular care to turn his eye from everything that is gaudy, luscious, and of a false taste. Nor is he less careful to turn his ear from every sort of music, besides that which is of the best manner, and truest harmony.⁷

To be a man of taste, one must beware of 'illiterate mankind,' of the public taste, of the public fashion, but also of one's individual fancy, "for if fancy be left judge of any thing, she must be judge of all. Everything is right, if any thing be so, because I fancy it."⁸ Taste, in short, supposes education (which is not free), self-discipline (which can be trained with education), and it further supposes an objective and disinterested standard of judgment to which correspond the right models of perfection.

Shaftesbury thus puts his finger on the two poles between which the discussion of taste in the eighteenth century will be conducted, and between which an equilibrium was sought: connoisseurship. and fancy, or, in Jane Austen's terms, sense and sensibility. Emphasis or insistence upon either one of the poles at the expense of the equilibrium results in the fallacies which belong in a period which would rule by taste: the appearance of being a man of taste or of possessing taste in the case of insisting upon connoisseurship, and the rule of mere fashion where fancy is left free to judge. In other words, a gentleman might easily appear to be a man of taste without being one; appearance might triumph over substance, just as the sheer power of imagination or fancy might create a new taste proclaiming itself to be true. The reasons are to be found within Shaftesbury's writings themselves, namely in the assumption of the existence of true models of perfection. Cite the true models, see the true models, praise the true models, learn the proper language to discuss them, and you appear to be a man of taste. Shaftesbury as well as his contemporary Addison mentioned the most

⁷ Shaftesbury. *Op. cit.* I 338.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 322.

conspicuous manner of achieving this by citing the Roman model, in short, the Grand Tour.

The Grand Tour was the confirmation of the man of taste, and I use the word with its religious connotations consciously, as Italy became a place of aesthetic pilgrimage. The Grand Tour was the finishing touch of the gentleman's education. But as concerns Taste it can hardly be likened to a voyage of discovery; it was precisely a confirmation of what one knew even before one got there. One knew what to look for, what to look at, what to admire, and what to bring back. There had been books to tell you all that; there were guides to help. form your taste; there were artists to advise you, take your orders, and ship. along your spoils, as well as fabricate fakes; one antique arm sufficed to inspire the rest of the statue. Thus the Grand Tour was not only a school of taste, but also one of conformity.

The various manuals on the arts, and the catalogues of collections, the various accounts of travels to Italy, from Jonathan Richardson's *A Discourse on the Dignity, Pleasures and Advantages of the Science of the Connoisseur*, 1715, or Addison's *Italian journey*, to the writings of Horace Walpole or Richard Payne Knight were so many catechisms of correct or true taste, associated with private virtue, public good, and moral tone. Jonathan Richardson joined utility to personal pleasure in his discussion of taste and the gentleman's education: "If gentlemen were lovers of painting, and connoisseurs, this would help. to reform themselves, as their example and influence would have the like effect on the common people." ⁹ With Richardson, connoisseurship. and taste turn into instruments of moral improvement long before Ruskin or the Pre-Raphaelites preached moral art:

If gentlemen [...] found pleasure in pictures, drawings, prints, statues, intaglios, and the like curious works of art; in discovering their beauties and defects; in making proper observation thereupon; and in all the other parts of a connoisseur, how many hours of leisure would here be profitably employed, instead of what is criminal, mischievous and scandalous. ¹⁰

And anticipating Diderot and the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century, Richardson also thought that in the long run money spent on art would prove a better investment than money spent on mere luxury such as gold plate and silver. The separation of art from luxury must here be underlined; for it is this separation which allows art to be linked to morality. Need it be said he turned out to be right, as witness those venerable eighteenth century establishments, Christie's and Sotheby's, which demonstrate that in the real world and that of gentlemen, the man of taste was already very much part of

⁹ Quoted by B. Denvir. *The Eighteenth Century, Art, Design and Society, 1689-1789*. (London: Longman, 1983) 70.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

an international art market, that the glory that was Rome was also a market place, but that all those artistic transactions were disinterested and gentlemanly.

In this wonderful world market of taste, beauty, morality and approved pleasure, Daniel Webb acted as does a financial adviser in today's world market of stocks and bonds—which is not to say that his advice was not sound. His *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* (1761) was intended in part precisely for the young gentleman on his way to Italy:

The persons for whom I write are our young travellers, who set out with much eagerness and little preparation, and who, for want of some governing objects to determine their course, must continually wander, misled by ignorant guides, or bewildered by multiplicity of directions.¹¹

Thus do they rush about churches and palaces wishing to see everything only to have in the end seen nothing. They must learn to choose. Taste is, after all, choice. Not everything that had been built or painted or sculpted is worth seeing. There exists a standard of taste; there exists a Pantheon of accepted works; there are models of perfection, and the man of Taste knows what they are. Taste is thus not only choice, judgment, but knowledge of the right models of perfection, as Shaftesbury knew.

It is far easier to know what constituted the standard of taste in eighteenth century Great Britain than it is to follow the definitions of taste, beauty, and the sublime on the level of theory. For the standard of taste can be shown, just as you can see what makes a man of taste. A picture is worth a thousand words, and Zoffany's *Tribuna of the Uffizi* is worth a thousand essays on taste. The picture represents a great many English *milordi* on the Grand Tour, standing and seated, looking and discussing, among the great works of ancient and modern art, painting as well as sculpture. The picture is the image of the right people in the right place at the right time looking at the right works of art. And the works included in the picture, and therefore the taste of the gentlemen in the picture, and I note there are no women, could only have been approved by Addison, Shaftesbury, Richardson, Webb, Horace Walpole and that ultimate virtuoso and artist and arbiter of taste, Sir Joshua Reynolds, though it would have undoubtedly, and not without reason, have been damned by Hogarth. The right taste, the true standard, was formulated in unforgettable terms by Horace Walpole: "In short, in my opinion, all the qualities of the perfect painter never met but in Raphael, Guido, and Annibale Carraci."¹² The theory of the standard of taste, quite aside from numerous treatises on taste, beauty, and the sublime, is set forth in Reynolds's *Discourses* where the following painters and sculptors are

¹¹ D. Webb. *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*. (London, 1761) preface, p. vi.

¹² J. Steegman. *The Rule of Taste*. (London: Macmillan, 1968) 102.

given as models of emulation to artists and virtuosi: the Carracci, Guido Reni, Salvator Rosa, Poussin, Lorrain, Parmigiano, Titian, Tintoretto, Corregio, and among the ancients, the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvedere, the Discobolus. Bad taste was represented by Bernini and Boucher whose followers were simply abominable. Poussin and Lorrain are accepted not as representatives of a French school, but because they were part of the Roman school. Indeed, the standard is essentially that of the antique and the Bolognese and Roman schools and if the Uffizi is the *tribuna*, the place where art is indeed up for judgment, it is because the Grand Duke of Tuscany had already set up a list of artists representing the Tuscan patrimony associated with the progress of the arts. True taste is a choice, the choice excludes the Dutch and French school. The standard was conservative, and academic in the strict sense of the term.

To possess works by such eminent artists, to know them, to show them, to praise them, was a sign of taste. And once back in England, Scotland or Ireland, once back in his town house or manor house or better, both, the man of taste might well see fit to redesign and redecorate the said manor house or town house in terms of this taste which fitted in quite naturally with an architecture based on the great Palladio interpreted by Inigo Jones and Lord Burlington, at least until the Adam brothers called that taste into question in the name of all standards: Antiquity. And then too, to make sure the gentlemen returned from Italy would look the man of taste, there were Reynolds and Gainsborough, or Zoffany, or Batoni, to paint his portrait with the proper attributes of his taste in the picture, some antique pieces, some architectural background, but above all, a stately pose inspired, in the case of Reynolds, by the antique. Later too, what with improved agriculture on the estate, and an improved income, the man of taste might also naturalise his taste by appealing to Capability Brown to redesign his grounds into a landscape garden at which point taste harmonized with nature and appeared to be not something learned, but something supposing wealth, not conventional, nor political, but, paradoxically, something quite natural, though not given to all, but only those of refined sensibility. Or shall we say the elect?

Shaftesbury's virtuoso, the Grand Tour, the various treatises on connoisseurship, all suppose an aesthetic built on the concept of art. But once attention is shifted from the objects which constitute the standard of taste, the models of perfection, to the psychology of taste, then one finds the assumption of aesthetic built on the concept of nature. Hume's speculations on taste and the standard of taste suppose such an aesthetic and his implied man of taste is not quite the same as that of Shaftesbury. The *virtuoso*, with Hume, turns into a philosopher and the pleasures of

connoisseurship into a possible state of happiness. Taste becomes the philosopher's quest for happiness in our sublunar vale of tears:

Philosophers have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of everything external. That is impossible to be attained, but every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects as depend upon himself; and that is not to be attained so much by any other means as by [...] delicacy of sentiment. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem or a piece of reasoning than the most expensive luxury can afford.¹³

Now what is this delicacy of sentiment associated with taste? It is a cure for too much sensibility, which is the case of Marianne, as of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse who had too much sensibility to judge well of a play or some work of music, and it is also the refined taste by which we judge of character, compositions of genius, and the productions of art. It is not by judging by rules, and for lack of such delicacy of sentiment, all the travels in Italy will avail a gentleman nothing more than having been to Italy. But shifting attention from the right models of perfection to the psychology of taste proved dangerous since it undermines the existence of an objective standard of taste. For if taste is purely subjective, subject to fancy, sensibility, then can it be objective and universal, can it be anything else but the whim of fashion.

There is no logical solution to this quandary. It will take some time for Marianne to distrust her feelings and sentiments. The solution lies not in reason, nor in logic, nor in the rules of art, but in that very standard which is being questioned. Hume remains convinced of an objective standard of taste because he has recourse to the Abbé Dubos's '*goût de comparaison*' and a general consensus of men and women of taste. The reasoning is something like this: what proves the validity of the established is that they are established. Thus Hume supposes "that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation of blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind."¹⁴ As there is a universal consensus on what can be ascertained to be true or false, moral or immoral, so too in matters of taste may one ascertain what is good and bad. Thus it is that "the same Homer, who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and London."¹⁵ Gentlemen and men of taste in Athens and Rome two thousand years ago had the same taste as men of taste in contemporary Paris and London. Human nature is

¹³ D. Hume. *Essays* (London, 1772) I 4-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

universal and since taste is founded in this human nature, it too must be universal.

But the unstated assumption is that human nature and universal taste are attributes of gentlemen of taste. For it is not given to all to possess or be endowed with delicacy of sentiment. They constitute the *élite* who set up the standard of taste; they are the true critics:

Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character (of being true critics); and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.¹⁶

The man of taste belongs to an *élite*. Not all men are capable of discerning true beauty from false, true taste from mere fashion; for “the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and [...] some men in general [...] will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have preference above others.”¹⁷ Within the class of gentlemen some are men of taste and some are not. Just as within the generality of mankind some are philosophers and most are not. Hume’s man of taste turns less into a gentleman on the Grand Tour than a philosopher in a salon as taste leads to a life of quiet friendship: “One that has well digested his knowledge of both books and men, has little enjoyment but in the company of a few select companions.”¹⁸ Within the general class of gentlemen, the man of taste thus appears as belonging to an *élite*, that which sets the standard of taste, which represents virtue and merit, as well as delicacy of sentiment and philosophy as wisdom; but as George Sand once wrote in her *Mémoires*, “mais tout cela supposait cent mille livres de rentes.” And so we might conclude by misquoting Wordsworth: “Sweet was it then to be alive, and sweeter still with ten thousand a year !”¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹ Eighteenth-century pounds of course !

MICHEL BARIDON

THE GENTLEMAN AS GARDENER:
POPE, SHENSTONE, MASON

To study garden literature in relation to courtesy-books is a paradoxical choice for an eighteenth century specialist. It is true that the development of landscape gardening is one of the original features of the period and, as such, it must have had an impact on the patterns of behaviour; but it is no less true that as an art form it does not seem to have reflected a high degree of social consciousness. Pope was alone in his grotto, and both Shenstone and Mason sang the pleasures of solitude. Thomas Gray, himself a gardenist and a poet highly representative of the modernity of his time, expressed the same feeling in his famous *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, whose title evinces more concern for the dead than for the living. And yet, the well-known line "And leaves the world to darkness and to me" is remembered as the perfect expression of the subdued sublimity that we have come to associate with the Brownian landscape. Some French opponents to the new style, Chabanon for example in his *Épître sur la manie des jardins anglois* (1775) described it as typical of that well-known malady, the spleen, which encouraged the suicidal dispositions of the English.

Since even the partisans of the English garden gloried in their love of ruins, funeral inscriptions and urns "sacred to the memory of" all sorts of people and even animals, one may well wonder whether the gentleman-gardener was not a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde figure, the embodiment of sociability in his house and the image of despondence in his garden. But however antisocial or asocial they may have seemed, his attitudes soon became the object of a sort of cult all over Europe. Gentlemen of note began to imitate a style of living which they associated with new artistic trends; and what was apparently a negation of sociability became the object of social imitation. It is this paradox which I would like to explore, showing the part played by gardenists and improvers in the relation of landscape gardening to social values from Pope's *Epistle to Burlington* to Mason's *The English Garden*.

Pope deserves special consideration and must be used as a starting point because his *Epistle to Burlington* remains to this day the strongest and neatest assertion of the social importance of gardens. Other poets had sung the landscape before him and others had enlarged on the bucolic themes of

rural retirement. But he was the first who designed a garden as an artefact meant to represent the conspicuous expression of his personality as a poet and as a moralist. I need not repeat here what Maynard Mack has so remarkably analysed in *The Garden and the City*, one of the profoundest books written on Pope and on the intellectual framework of the Hanoverians.

What I would like to do is to enquire into Pope's motivation when he designed his garden at Twickenham, assuming that by so doing he was giving himself a new dimension as a poet, a dimension that expressed the modernity of his time. Or in other words, why is it that poetic inspiration as it came to him in his grotto qualified him to be the poet that could teach others how to live a fuller and a better life ?

To understand this paradox one has to start from that great regulator of Hanoverian social standards, Addison. Pope and Addison were related in more ways than one because they were associated in such important journalistic ventures as the *Spectator* and the *Guardian* and because, once their paths had begun to diverge for political reasons, Pope denounced his former friend with a contained viciousness which betrays the admiration he once had for him.

It is no exaggeration to say that in his *Moral Epistles* Pope took his cue from the *Spectator*. His intention was the same, to provide moral standards for the post-1688 age, but his tone was different, even when he spoke of gardens, a theme which Addison had developed in several numbers of the *Spectator*. Since the Addison-Pope filiation obviously bears a relation to Augustan patterns of behaviour, I would like to discuss garden literature in relation to the general evolution of ideas and manners in the Georgian age. For the sake of clarity I shall group the different aspects of this complex question under four different headings, economics, politics, aesthetics and psychology. All four were already in Addison, but Pope imposed upon them the unmistakable mark of his poetic genius.

The economic aspect of landscape gardening is familiar to all the readers of *Spectator* n° 414 (25 June 1712):

But why may not a whole estate be thrown into a kind of Garden by frequent Plantations, that may turn as much to the Profit as the Pleasure of the Owner ? A Marsh overrun with Willows, or a Mountain shaded with Oaks, are not only more beautiful but more beneficial than when they lie bare and unadorned. Fields of Corn make a pleasant Prospect, and if the Walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, if the natural Embroidery of the Meadows were helpt and improved by small Additions of Art, and the several Rows of Hedges set off by Trees and Flowers, that the Soil was capable of receiving, a Man might make a pretty Landskip of his own Possessions.

In this famous text which could almost serve as a perfect caption for

Gainsborough's no less famous *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, Addison turns one of the central social values of the time, property, into art.

Enough has been written on the importance of property in the mental framework of eighteenth century élites; there is no need to reproduce here the bibliographies compiled by H.T. Dickinson in his *Politics and Literature in the 18th Century*. To connect Addison and Pope and to understand why property was so important in the world view of the gentleman turned gardener one has to take a closer look at the part played by philosophers in the emergence of property as a key concept.

In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, C.B. Macpherson has shown convincingly why private property dominated the political reflexion which opened the way for the downfall of the Stuarts. Hobbes recognized the importance of property but he made it subservient to the interests of the state.¹ It was not so with Locke who made the state subservient to the interests of property.² There is abundant proof of this in the many passages of the *Second Treatise of Civil Government* in which property is equated with life in his definition of citizenship. To defend property was to prove oneself an irreconcilable opponent to the encroachments of central power. He who owned property had his share in the affairs of the state.

Admittedly, Locke's definition of property was more radical than the country gentlemen thought, for property according to him had more to do with personal accumulation than with inheritance, but the Glorious Revolution was a compromise, and as long as property was felt to be the basis on which civil society rested, it mattered little whether it was property acquired by one's own work (as well as one's servant's work) or whether it was inherited property. In fact, twenty years later, the Tory landslide which followed upon the 1710 election gave a conservative turn to this compromise, and a law was passed stipulating that candidates for election must possess real estate worth £600 p. a. if they wished to contest a county seat, and £300 p. a. if they wished to stand for a borough. "The design of this, Bishop Burnet commented, is to exclude courtiers, military men and merchants from sitting in the House of Commons, in hopes that this being settled, the landed interest would be the prevailing consideration in all their consultations." ³

¹ "The Property which a subject hath in his lands consisteth in a right to exclude all other subjects from the use of them; and not to exclude their sovereigns, be it an Assembly or a Monarch." (Hobbes. *Leviathan*. ed. C.B. Macpherson, [1968], 1985, Part II, chapter 24, p. 297.)

² "The great and chief end therefore of Mens uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government is the Preservation of their Property." (Locke. *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett, *Second Treatise*, chap. 9, § 124, p. 395.)

³ Quoted by H.T. Dickinson. *Liberty and Property*. (London, 1977) p. 52.

To quote this text is to understand why, in Hanoverian England, landed property carried with it considerable social prestige while the fortunes made in commerce and in early industrial ventures had to take their time before they could enjoy the sweets of power and social recognition.

We know by M. Turner's book on *The Politics of Landscape* how perilous it could be to live in the vicinity of a country-seat when the local squire decided to extend his garden. The squires ruled the land and those who made money in the City bought estates in order to acquire social distinction and to play a political role. In his *Plan of the English Commerce* Defoe remarked :

I dare oblige myself to name five hundred great estates, within one hundred miles of London, which within eighty years past, were the possessions of the antient English gentry, which are now bought up, and in the possession of citizens and tradesmen, purchased fairly by money raised in trade. ⁴

Old acres meant political power. We have only to read Burke's correspondence with Lord Rockingham, or Godwin's *Caleb Williams* to understand the role played by those who owned the land. Their houses were truly 'houses of power.' This explains why Pope lived with the great and helped them beautify their estates. Their parks and their Palladian mansions were status symbols which stood for wealth, power and culture, a little like the museums and the foundations which bear the names of our modern millionaires. Pope illustrates the cultural role of the landowners in the following letter:

I write an hour or two every morning, then ride out a hunting upon the Downes, eat heartily, talk tender sentiments with Lord Bathurst or draw plans for houses and Gardens, open Avenues, cut Glades, plant Firrs, contrive waterworks, all very fine in our Imagination. ⁵

This is exactly the turning of property into art as defined by Addison. But Pope realized that to advise his contemporaries on the vital question of politics and social codes, he had to place his literary work on the solid foundation of landed property. He bought an estate and turned his garden into a miniature park (see pl. XIV), drawing amusement, as Maynard Mack says, "from considering himself a minuscule inhabitant of a world tailored to suit him." He was, as he himself said, "as busy in three inches of gardening as any man can be in three score acres... like the fellow that spent his life cutting the twelve apostles in one cherry stone." ⁶ This could easily be

⁴ Quoted by L. Namier. *England in the Age of the American Revolution*. [1930], 1961 p. 11.

⁵ Quoted by M. Mack. *The Garden and the City*, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

represented as a phantasmal recreation of property on a small scale to wield power on a large scale, not unlike the owner of a model railway network when he gives himself the pleasure of regulating the life of thousands of travellers at his own will. I need not insist here on the insight this gives into the apparent paradox of the poet who, while he describes himself as the gardener in search of rural happiness, plays in fact with the idea that retirement entitles him to act on the moral standards on the nation. To quote Maynard Mack again:

Though the throne is empty, there remains an alternative center, and a power of a different kind: the poet-king-philosopher in his grotto, midway between the garden and the river. Under his magisterial wand, like the wreck'd voyager in *The Tempest*, lords and rich men, ministers and society wenches, kings, courtiers, Quakers, clowns and good Ralph Allens move through the paces of an intricate satirical ballet, which combines the features of reality and dream.⁷

*

Now that the problem of the connection between property and politics has been dealt with, we may approach the more difficult points of landscape architecture and psychology which may explain why the gardener considered himself to be the living expression of the modernity of the age. He could bring distinction to his possessions, however small, by beautifying them. But in what style ?

The regularity and symmetry of the baroque garden in the Le Notre style could not do. Here again we find Pope following in the steps of Addison. The French style was too formal, its geometry dry, its symmetry uninspiring. In the *Tatler* n°161, Addison describes a dream in which he "fancied himself among the Alps," seeing a river, the Rhône, in a place

...cover'd with a Profusion of Flowers, that, without being disposed into regular Borders and Parterres grew promiscuously and had a greater Beauty in their natural Luxuriancy and Disorder than they could have received from the Checks and the Restraints of Art. [...] This River after having made its Progress among free Nations stagnates in a huge Lake at the leaving of them; and no sooner enters the Regions of Slavery but runs through them with an incredible Rapidity, and takes it shortest Way to the Sea.

It will be remembered that Pope uses the same visual arguments against bad taste in his *Epistle to Burlington*:

On ev'ry side you look behold the Wall !
No pleasing intricacies intervene,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
 Groves nod at groves, each Alley has a Brother,
 And half the Platform just reflects the other.

Bad taste results from having taken what he calls the 'high priori' road (a pun on the axiomatic method used by the Cartesian school) and from having imposed on nature a geometrical pattern quite in keeping with the despotism of the Sun-King. To be in favour of asymmetry and irregularity was to declare oneself a friend to civil liberty and a partisan of the mixed constitution. The argument developed by Addison became so popular that it was taken up by Repton almost a century later when he said that the English garden was

... the happy medium betwixt the wildness of nature and the stiffness of art; in the same manner as the English consitution is the happy medium betwixt the liberty of the savages and the restraint of despotic government.⁸

In fact the triumph of the serpentine line in the English garden was fostered by this political myth, but since the same tendencies were at work in painting, in literature and even in the gradual decline of the rhymed couplet (witness the success of Thomson's *Seasons*), the causes of this evolution must be found in the foundations of the intellectual life of the period. Newtonianism was introducing deep changes into the the scientific imagination of the Augustans. There is little time to go into so complex a question but it can be said very briefly that the turn of the century was marked by the downfall of Cartesianism and the gradual waning of the mechanistic world picture.

This can be shown by putting side by side four quotations, Descartes and Wren on the one hand, Shaftesbury and Defoe on the other. In his *Discourse on Method* Descartes contrasted the beautiful cities "regularly laid out on a plain by a surveyor" with the "crooked and irregular" streets of the old cities which seemed to have been designed by chance rather than by the will of men guided by reason.⁹ Wren also spoke of 'Geometrical figures' as being 'naturally' more beautiful than 'others irregular.'¹⁰ One generation later Shaftesbury promoted new aesthetic standards criticizing "the formal mockery of princely gardens" on account of the fact that "the wildness pleases."¹¹ Almost at the same time we find Defoe describing the pleasure he felt at describing old cities because "the fate of things gives a new face to

⁸ Repton. *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening*. p. 146-147.

⁹ Descartes. *A Discourse on Method*. Part II, chap. 1 (tr. J. Veitch) (London: Dent, 1953).

¹⁰ *Memoirs of Sir Christopher Wren*. Tract 1, *Discourse on Architecture*, p. 118.

¹¹ Shaftesbury. *The Moralists*, in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. II, 1723, p. 393-94.

things.”¹² To that generation, the earth seemed to be in ruins because, as Burnet had shown in his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, it bore the marks of God’s wrath after Man’s fall. Its face was the image of its fate and the very history of the earth made nature irregular. The scientific imagination of the time imposed a change in aesthetic codes.

*

This leads us to the fourth aspect of Pope’s modernity, psychology. The pleasure felt in the contemplation of ruins depended on the wealth of sense impressions generated by ruins. It also depended on the feeling that one was part of the general flow of things, part of the general life of nature. Hence Pope’s desire to shut himself up in his grotto, the ideal place to refine on the sense impressions which formed the warp and woof of his mental life. In other words, while Le Nôtre wrote to the Prince de Condé, “Je continuerai à élever mes pensées pour l’embellissement de vos parterres, fontaines, cascades, de votre grand jardin de Chantilly,”¹³ Pope went underground to concentrate on the germination of ideas.

Here again Addison had opened the way with the description of a grotto in *Spectator* n°414: “The prettiest Landskip I ever saw, was one drawn on the Walls of a dark Room that stood opposite on one Side to a navigable River and on the other to a Park.” This is exactly the situation of Pope’s grotto, the great difference being that Pope added the noise of water to the *camera obscura* effects he commanded. He multiplied the sense impressions he received in order to grasp the roots of his mental life second after second, minute after minute, in true Lockean fashion. Considering that Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was published in 1690, and Newton’s *Opticks* in 1704, it is obvious that the scientific imagination of the early 18th century acted as a ferment in the creation of the English garden.

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Shenstone, who was born in 1714, followed in the steps of Pope while Mason, who died in 1797, followed in the steps of Shenstone. They used the same elements in the conception of their gardens but the proportions changed and announced greater changes still. The creation of the Leasowes (see plate XV) was the work of a life time. *The English Garden* was

¹² Defoe. *A Journey through the Whole Island of Great Britain* [1724-1729] Author’s preface, Everyman ed., 1966, p. 2.

¹³ Quoted by E. de Ganay. *Les Jardins de France et leur décor* (Paris, 1949) p. 107.

composed over a period of 10 years (1771-81). This was a great age in the history of English garden literature, with Brown spreading the vogue of the new style and Whately giving it its most accomplished critical analysis. But I choose to concentrate on Mason and Shenstone because Whately loved gardening as a critic whereas both Shenstone and Mason loved it as poets, and even if they did not rank among the best poets in an unpoetical age they at least knew that a true poet's life is inseparable from his literary creation.

Since Pope was also highly conscious of this, we shall deal with his two followers by discussing the same elements economy, politics, aesthetics and psychology, but in a different order. Psychology and aesthetics will be examined first in order to show why solitude took on another significance and why the gentleman turned gardener saw himself as an educator of sensibility more than as a reformer of manners. Then I shall pass on to economics and politics to show that, far from turning away from the social scene, he saw solitude as an instrument of moral improvement which entitled him to play his part in the political world.

Both Shenstone and Mason saw the gardener as a poet, but a poet whose inspiration sprang from the natural world. Shenstone said: "My favourite theme is a poem, in blank verse, upon rural elegance, including cascades, temples, grottos, hermitages, green houses."¹⁴ And Mason also chose the blank verse because "numbers of the most varied kind" were "most proper to illustrate a subject whose charm springs from variety." Besides, the blank verse was, he said, "as unfettered a nature itself."¹⁵ They both accounted themselves followers of Milton and Thomson, not of Pope. And understandably so since there was in the rhymed couplet an element of regularity which had once suited the neo-classicists because it "circumscribed the fancy."¹⁶ This very sentence proves how far away from them the aesthetics of sensibility had moved. What was a positive point with Dryden had become a negative one with the poets of nature who wished to please "the imagination by scenes of grandeur, beauty and variety."¹⁷

No wonder that Shenstone should have named Burke and Hutcheson among the philosophers who had influenced him most, for both were disciples of Locke, basing mental life on sense impressions and insisting on the importance of the time element in the process which changed these sense impressions into concepts. But while Locke had had very little to do with gardens, Hutcheson mentioned them and discussed the action of nature on our senses in a way highly typical of the aesthetics of sensibility:

¹⁴ Shenstone. *Works* III, p. 68.

¹⁵ *The English Garden*. (London 1783), preface, p. VII.

¹⁶ Dryden. Dedication of *The Rival Ladies* in *Essays*, ed. Ker, I, p. 78.

¹⁷ Shenstone. *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening*.

We may here observe a strange Proneness in our Minds to make *perpetual Comparisons* of all things which recur to our Observation, even those which would seem very remote [...] *Inanimate Objects* often have such Positions as resemble those of the *Human Body* in various circumstances; these *Airs* or *Gestures* of the *Body* are *Indications* of *Dispositions* in the *Mind*, so that our *Passions* and *Affections* as well as other *Circumstances* obtain a *Resemblance* to *Natural inanimate Objects*. Thus a *Tempest* at sea is often an *Emblem* of *Wrath*; a *Plant* or *Tree* drooping under the rain, of a *Person* in *Sorrow*; a *Poppy* bending its stalk or a *Flower* when withering when cut by the *Plow*, resembles the death of a blooming *hero*; an *aged Oak* in the mountain shall represent an *old Empire*, a *flame* seizing a wood shall represent a *war*. In short, every thing in *Nature* by our strange inclination to *Resemblance*, shall be brought to represent other things even the most remote, especially the *Passions* and *Circumstances* of human nature in which we are more nearly concerned.¹⁸

This is a text of great importance because it gives a philosophical status to what was instinctively felt to be the modernity of the age. According to Hutcheson, sensibility established connections between the emotions of man and the forms of nature. If such was the case, the gardener found in the landscape echoes of his own innermost feelings and he could design a garden in such a way as to open a dialogue with nature and educate himself at her contact.

Again, what was at work here was the scientific movement which turned away from the mechanism of the seventeenth century by putting the stress on the living world. The gentleman gardener proved by his own example that the sciences of nature were part of the education of sensibility. If we look at a map of the Leasowes we shall find that it looks like a network of nerves or blood vessels. This reflects a new way of living in the bosom of nature. Like Pope, Shenstone did use such emblems as urns, vases, statues and inscriptions; but they were to be seen along circuits which varied according to the seasons of the year. The association of sensibility with time, typical of Locke's conception of mental life, was always present at the Leasowes under three different forms: cosmic time with the love of irregular rocks, clearly a reminiscence of Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* but also historical time with ruins and with the view on the neighbouring church tower generating association with the Saxon past of the country (witness Shenstone's elegy on St Kenelm) and even meteorological time with the constant change in the colour of the sky. Shenstone wrote to Lady Luxborough: "There is not a single cloud or Dimness in the sky but has its exact image or Counterpart in my imagination."¹⁹

¹⁸ Francis Hutcheson. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Londres, 1725, Section 2, Art. 4.

¹⁹ Shenstone to lady Luxborough, quoted by Hélène Dupeyron-Marchessou, *Le Jardin d'un poète*, doctoral thesis (Université Paris VII), 1975, p. 113.

The result of this endless dialogue with nature and the composition of scenes designed in such a way as to educate the poet's sensibility, explain a very penetrating remark made to Shenstone by his friend Whistler: "You indeed have contrived to make your soul visible."²⁰ A remark like this proves that with Shenstone we move from the age of Addison to that of Rousseau and indeed there was a connection between Rousseau, Shenstone and Mason since the Marquis de Girardin, who designed Ermenonville, inscribed the name of Shenstone on the brick obelisk erected near the altar of reverie²¹ and since Mason put a bust of Rousseau in the garden he designed for Viscount Nuneham at Nuneham Courtenay.

The reference to Rousseau is enough to explain why the very decoration of gardens changed and why Mason took an interest in flowers which was reflected in the romantic garden since, as Rousseau said, if God was great in great things, he was even greater in small ones. The gentleman-gardener could no longer be content with improving his place, he now had to botanize it. Wright of Derby's portrait of *Sir Brooke Boothby* (Tate Gallery) is the perfect illustration of this important evolution. Brooke Boothby, himself a friend and a great reader of Rousseau, will help us leave the sphere of psychology and aesthetics to come to the last part of this paper which concerns economics and politics.

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Admiration for Jean-Jacques implied a reconsideration of the problem of private ownership and since we mentioned the beautifying of one's estate as one of the aims of the gentleman-gardener we must now concentrate on the problem he was confronted with when he read in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*: "The first man who enclosed a piece of ground and who was naively believed when he said this is mine was the cause of all the miseries to which mankind has been a prey." Shenstone was no Rousseauist of course, since he died in 1763 at a time when Rousseau was only beginning to be known in England. But he had an interesting theory about private property, presenting it not as a source of profit, but as an instrument by which to acquire a true knowledge of nature:

In general it is probably true that the possessor, if he has any taste, must be the best designer of his own improvements. He sees his situations in all the seasons of the year, at all times of the day. He knows where beauty will not clash with convenience, and observes in his silent walks or accidental rides a thousand hints that must escape a person who in a few days sketches

²⁰ Quoted by H. Dupeyron-Marchessou, p. 286.

²¹ Dora Wiebenson. *The Picturesque Garden in France*. (Princeton University Press, 1978) p. 83.

out a pretty picture, but has not had leisure to examine the details and relations of every part.

Hence his definition of The Leasowes as not a '*parc orné*' but a '*ferme ornée*' in contradistinction to the parks which surrounded 'the houses of power.' He presented himself as a friend of nature, a 'true green' who wore his own hair, did his own garden and imprinted a personal mark on the landscape.

Mason, who quoted the name of Shenstone in the first book of *The English Garden*, took the same line, equating the French formal garden with folly and wealth:

O how unlike the scene my fancy forms
 Did Folly, heretofore, with Wealth conspire
 To plan that formal, dull, disjointed science
 Which once was called a garden. Britain still
 Bears on her breast full many a hideous wound
 Given by the cruel pair, when borrowing aid
 From geometric skill, they vainly strove
 By line, by plummet, and unfeeling sheers,
 To form with verdure what the builder formed with stone.²²

But politically he went much further. If the garden was not associated with wealth, what was it exactly? Mason knew the importance of this question and he answered it in the very first lines of his poem:

Begin the song! and ye Albion's sons
 Attend; ye free-born, ye ingenious few,
 Who, heirs of competence, if not of wealth,
 Preserve that vestal purity of soul
 Whence genuine taste proceeds.²³

This beginning may seem conventional, for the free-born Englishman, whose liberty depended on the possession of land, was a theme amply developed by all the propagandists of the mixed constitution and abundantly illustrated in Bolingbroke's *Craftsman*. But what was new here was the idea that the free-born Englishman preserved a "vestal purity of soul" from which he derived an innate sense of what was right not only in matters of taste, but also of politics. In other words, the gentleman gardener had no need to go to Oxford and Cambridge to form his taste by the imitation of the classics; the contemplation of nature and the love of rural elegance were in themselves an intellectual formation.

To this formation the ruins left here and there in the countryside contributed their great share, since, as he wrote:

²² *The English Garden*. Book 1, l. 386.

²³ *Ibid*, l. 50-55.

And there are scenes, where, though she [=Oppression] whilom trod
 Led by the worst of guides, fell Tyranny,
 And ruthless superstition, we now trace
 Her footsteps with delight; and pleased reverse
 What once had roused our hatred.²⁴

This connection even extended to the problems of the day. In Book IV of *The English Garden* Mason drew Gothic ruins and present day politics together by bringing the American revolution into the scene. This was the occasion of what he called 'a romantic tragedy'. The hero Alcander lived in a country house in which "...No modern art / Had marr'd with misplac'd symmetry the pile." While he was improving his garden he saw a ship driven ashore by a tempest and was lucky enough to save the only survivor, Nerina, from drowning. He soon fell in love with her and he gave expression to his passion by buiding a 'glittering fane' in her honour, but she preferred in true Rousseauistic fashion

... a little woodbine bower
 Where I might sit and weep; while all around
 The lilies and the bluebells hung their heads
 In seeming sympathy.

In fact, Nerina could not be happy because she was far away from her native land, America. One day Cleon, a young man unknown to Alcander, arrived and immediately launched into a long discussion of ruins. Hardly had Alcander convinced him that only Gothic ruins could be placed in an English garden when Nerina, who happened to pass by, recognized him as a compatriot and a suitor whom her father wished her to marry. But Cleon was the bearer of sad tidings: he revealed that Nerina's father had been burnt to death in Boston, English troops having set fire to his house. On hearing this, Nerina died, Cleon went away and Alcander consoled himself by building a hermit's cell in his garden and by praying old England's genius to arise and save the country from decadence and corruption.

The reader may smile, but this garden tragedy, with its romantic undertones is typical of the social attitude of the man of sentiment who could turn himself into a hermit the better to edify his countrymen. Mason's claim to reform manners and to regenerate English politics clearly announces the marquis de Girardin's wish to make Ermenonville stand for a physiocratic utopia²⁵ and Shelley's definition of the poet as legislator. As

²⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 360-65.

²⁵ "Bientôt, la commodité de la réunion de la terre, le genre des jardins paysages, le goût des véritables jouissances de la nature, des plaisirs purs exempts de regrets, et le spectacle des campagnes heureuses ne manqueraient pas d'y ramener cette classe de Citoyens dont l'absence les épuise et dont la présence les soutiendrait." R.L. de Girardin. *De la Composition des paysages* [1777] (Paris, 1979) p. 116.

such it can inspire a few concluding remarks on the social role of the gentleman-gardeners of the 18th century.

My first remark will be that, although none of them ever presented himself as a writer of conduct-books, their writings were *implicitly* recognized as important. This was so because as poets, their private lives bore a strong relation to their writings. This leads to a second point, the fact that as poets they observed the natural world with a wish to express the modernity of their age. They could only do this by picturing the new world view, not as scientists in their own right, but as laymen giving a literary expression to the phantasmal forms generated by the discoveries of which they heard. Hence the importance of Lockean psychology in the spreading of new ideas concerning gardens and social attitudes. These new ideas percolated into the *mentalités* and public opinion realized the importance of the garden as a pilot art form. I hope to have shown that, inspite of their attraction to solitude, the gentlemen-gardeners of the eighteenth century contributed actively to the movement of ideas. As such, albeit implicitly, they can be considered active promoters of new patterns of behaviour.

PART FOUR

THE LADY AND THE SPOUSE

MAURICE MONTABRUT

COURTLY MANNERS IN A VICTORIAN HOME:
PATMORE'S *THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE*

The Angel in the House is to be read as a sequence of four books of octosyllabic verse published respectively in 1854 ('The Betrothal'), 1856 ('The Espousals'), 1860 ('The Victories of Love, Book I, Faithful for Ever'), 1862 ('The Victories of Love, Book II'). Revised and collected in two volumes in 1863, the sequence was to become an increasingly popular and therefore influential book in the English-speaking world as late as the culturally divisive date of 1914.¹

Deliberately unsensational, the story records 'the heart's events' of two loves, the psychological and theological interpretation of which is to be found in the accompanying 'Preludes' to the narrative 'Cantos.' Many have read the Cantos as genteel, edifying or mawkish romance, interpreting *The Angel in the House* as an extolment of the saintly wife, and the heroines of the love stories (patrician Honoria and plebeian Jane) as two of the many Madonnas of Victorian fiction. Courtesy could thus appear as a form of social and private worship of the wife. Yet read within the whole context of Coventry Patmore's verse and prose works,² *The Angel in the House* appears as richly polysemic, each meaning stemming from the Latin Angelus,³ the earthly precursor, foreshadow or terrestrial correlative of a heavenly reality or design. The Angel is no doubt the 'destined' or 'predestinated' maid⁴ that initiates one of the few moments of awakening and revelation⁵ in a man's life: a foreshadow of heavenly grace is then given lovely incarnate shape in woman, here called *Honoria*, a victorianisation of one of the major abstractions of courtly lyric or romance

¹ All quotations refer to Frederick Page's edition of Coventry Patmore's poems (London: Oxford U. P., 1949). Abbreviations: *AH* = Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*. *AL* = C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*. *UE* = Coventry Patmore, *The Unknown Eros*.

² See in particular the Odes of *UE* (1877-79) and the collection of aphorisms under the title of *The Rod, the Root and the Flower*, (London, 1896).

³ *Angelus*, namely 'the precursor' in the Latin of the Vulgate. The Douay version of the Bible has Luke 7, 26-27 as follows: 'For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my ANGEL before thy face who shall prepare thy way before thee.' But the esoteric meaning of the word *angel* (man & wife in one flesh, the married pair) is a borrowing from Swedenborg's *Delitiae Sapientiae De Amore Conjugiali*, cf. infra note 9.

⁴ *AH*, 'Mary and Mildred' 4, 75; 'Honoria', Prelude, 'The Lover', 77.

⁵ *AH*, Prelude, 'The Revelation' 106.

(*Honour*). In Patmore's poem Honoria is thus to Felix (the happy wooer) what Beatrice was to Dante, but a Beatrice married and radiating her beneficence as the *Lady* of Hurst Hall, the *Queen* of immaculate, clearly unadulterous espousals. A transference has occurred: the mistress is no longer adverse to the wife: the mistress is also the wife.⁶

But the Angel is also the earthly embodiment and precursor of Christ and his Spouse in the married couple experimenting the heavenly manners of mutual self-dedication "after the narrow mode the mighty heavens prefer."⁷ The narrow mode can materialise in the spacious manor of Felix and Honoria or the suburban lodgings of Frederick and Jane. It is nevertheless in either case 'a house,' the visible earthly body of a transforming process. But of this later on. Suffice it to say that with Patmore as with Dante love, and courtly love specifically, combines anthropology and theology while manners, as the comprehensive term for a code of behaviour, ultimately signify a kind of *initiatory* way to the meaning of life, a *revelation* of the right essence of Man and God.

After this introductory note to the book and its manifold purport. I shall now try and show how courtly manners in the comprehensive meaning here above defined are the very core and essence of this mid-Victorian Song of 'fin amors.' 'Fin amors' is no unwarranted reference to Provençal songs and lyrics. Patmore had read them and was to contribute an article to the *Natural Review* on the troubadours at a time (1858) when the two earlier volumes of *The Angel in the House* had already been published. Reviewing Claude Fauriel's *Histoire de la poésie provençale* and St Palaye's *Histoire littéraire des troubadours*, he interprets in his own light the conditions of emergence of 'courtly love' in medieval Provence, thus providing the reader with an interpretative clue of his own amorous verse:

The condition of the church, the desperate depravity of man's highest external guidance, goes far to explain the social state depicted so faithfully by the Troubadours. ... Accordingly, the irreligion of the world consisted not so much in ignorance and neglect of divine doctrines and ideas, as in blasphemous familiarity with them. The language of love profited largely by this corruption of religion, just as the reality was exalted by the peculiar social conditions, which, by making every feudal castle a court and its mistress a queen, afforded additional excitements of, and excuses for, the extravagant respect to which love, under all circumstances, tends to abandon itself. It is impossible to reconcile the grossness which often betrays itself in the literature of the period with the moods of exalted delicacy and honour which constitute its principal charm, otherwise than by attributing the latter mainly to the accident which usually placed a gulf of social difference between the lover and his mistress—a gulf which he

⁶ AH, 'The Wedding Sermon' 3: 'To keep your mistress in your wife...'

⁷ UE I, II. 'Wind and Wave', 353.

could only hope to overpass by a long series of services, and by a display of self-devotion which should gradually change the lady's desire of public praise into personal affection for the giver of it. *It remains for a later and more truly chivalrous age to glorify love between persons socially equal with that halo of reverence which we have so long admired, without remembering its limitations or comprehending its explanations, in the life and poetry of the middle ages.*

Three points are here of relevance to our purpose:

1. Patmore notes as a distinctive feature of Provençal love poetry "the extravagant respect to which love *under all circumstances*⁸ tends to abandon itself." Of like nature are "the moods of exalted delicacy and honour which constitute its principal charm." Reading the amours of Honoria and Felix provides, as we shall see, ample confirmation of such respect and such moods and the consequent behaviour which they entail.

2. As a second distinctive feature, Patmore speaks (in very Patmorean terms) of "a *gulf* of social *difference* between the lover and his mistress." Now what was possibly regarded in the Middle Ages as *social* difference—the gulf between Lady/Dame/Mistress and Servant/ Servitor/Liege—was seen by Patmore as an essential condition of true conjugal love. Originally the difference may have sprung from constraining social conditions but even with the Troubadours, as Patmore himself suggests, the difference was felt as a metaphor of that respect and reverential distance they thought essential to the life of 'fin amors.' In other words, and in either case, courtesy and courteous manners schooled man into realizing that 'respect' and 'reverence' sprang from an awareness of the unbridgeable 'difference' between partners in love. In Patmore's poetry love is never felt or advocated as a blending or a merging, but as an ever increasing consciousness of the otherness of the beloved alter ego: Adam's cry of wonderment at the sight of Eve is to be translated in the paradoxical but highly revealing phrase: "Marvel of me most far from me!" (*The Angel in the House*, 'The Wedding Sermon,' 9: 332).

3. A third remark points to the religious or theological roots of 'courtly love.' Patmore shares with the scholars of yesterday and today the idea that courtly love borrowed largely from the Christian theology of the time, its dogmatic and discipline, to formulate its code of amorous relationships and gracious manners. To my knowledge Patmore never mentions Andreas Capellanus (André le Chapelain) and his *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, but his extensive readings into Medieval and Renaissance poetry,⁹ from the *Rousier*

⁸ Many passages in *AH* are a clear illustration of this permanence of love's enigmatic behaviour.

⁹ As early as the 1854 edition of *AH*, the title page bore as an epigraph the following quotation from a French medieval chantefable, *Le Rousier des Dames*: 'Par la grâce infinie,

des Dames and Chaucer to Spenser's *Fairie Queen*, Shakespeare's romantic comedies and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, so much impregnated his thoughts that the essentials of that *Ars Amandi* have clearly been assimilated by the characters of *The Angel in the House*—with one crucial difference, however: the rites of courtly love do strictly apply to conjugal love from its incipient stage ('the Betrothal') to its final consummation and achievements ('the Espousals'). Here again we have the transference from mistress to wife. In this light *The Angel in the House* is a clearly polemical work: Patmore incidentally refers to his own poems as 'truly chivalrous' exemplars of courtly manners.

As we are trying to prove, Patmore sees his poetic endeavour as a reclaiming of holy land ¹⁰ from heretical sway. As a consequence:

1. The irreverent reverence of courtly rites and manners, so flippant in the *Concilium in Monte Romanici* ¹¹ or so solemn in *De Arte Honeste Amandi* was to be shown as a prophecy of the 'new chivalry' of modern married lovers.

2. The 'blasphemous' theology of the Troubadours and codifiers of courtly love (it bolstered and extolled adultery real or feigned) was to be shown as a distorted apprehension of a fundamental truth: the enigmatic reverence of the passion with its extravagant respect, its exalted delicacy and honour, was to be presented in like manner as the visible lineaments of a veiled mystery: the mystery of incarnate nuptial love as an analogue or image of God's own invisible essence:

...The Prototype
 Lo, there, whence love, life, light are pour'd ¹²
 Veil'd with impenetrable rays,
 Amidst the presence of the Lord
 Co-equal Wisdom ¹³ laughs and plays.
Female and male God made the man;
His image is the whole, not half;
And in our love we dimly scan
The love which is between Himself.
 (AH, VIII, Prelude IV, 106)

Dieu les mist au monde ensemble.' A clear adumbration of Patmore's unchanging conjugal metaphysics.

¹⁰ Cf. AH, 'Prelude', 'The Poet's Confidence', 65:

The richest realm of all the earth
 Is counted still a heathen land:
 Lo, I, like Joshua, now go forth
 To give it into Israel's hand.

¹¹ *Concilium in Monte Romanici* or *Concile de Remiremont*, 'a twelfth-century jeu d'esprit' according to C. S. Lewis, *AL*, 18.

¹² Note the trinitarian formula phrased in Johanine terms.

¹³ See *Proverbs* VIII, 31. Also *Vulgate*, *Prov.*, Caput VIII, 22-31.

This transference from Mistress and adulterous worship to Wife and conjugal reverence is given metaphorical expression in terms of architecture and landscape at the very outset of the poem. Reclaiming holy ground and orthodox theology is at once manifest. Honoria, the lady-to-be, is the eldest daughter of the Dean of Salisbury Cathedral, intentionally mentioned after its antique name, Old Sarum. Consequently the birth, growth and final fruition of Honoria and Felix's amours will take place either within the Cathedral Close or within the shadow and chimes of its august spire. Later the 'nuptial chrysalis' will adjourn to Hurst Hall, Felix's ancestral manor house, where the Lord's library and the Lady's boudoir offer inevitable vistas onto the same sacred shrine. The polemical undertone is pictorially unmistakable.

Now a major trait is immediately apparent: 'the nursling of civility,' namely courtesy and courtly manners, needs, as it did in twelfth-century Provence, the seclusion and precincts of an aristocratic abode, the Close and the Manor instead of the feudal Hall. However ingenious Patmore may have been in transforming his modest suburban 'houses' into fitting places for courtesy for as long as he remained aid-librarian at the British Museum¹⁴, there is no real breakaway in his poetry from the aristocratic ethos that attaches to 'fin amors' and fine manners. Accordingly all the distinctive features and values of courtesy—adultery of course excepted—find congenial surroundings and circumstances in the leisurely, devotional tenor of life at Old Sarum. This is perceptible both in the descriptive detail of the narrative and the actual language of narrator and actors. Of the detail of daily life, one significant example:

... Sarum Plain
 Breakfast enjoy'd, 'mid hush of boughs
 And perfumes thro' the windows blown;
 Brief worship done, which still endows
 The day with beauty not its own;
 With intervening pause, that paints
 Each act with honour, life with calm
 (As old processions of the Saints
 At every step have wands of palm),
 We rose; the ladies went to dress,
 And soon return'd with smiles; and then,
 Plans fix'd, to which the Dean said 'Yes,'
 Once more we drove to Salisbury Plain.
 (AH, 'Sarum Plain' (I) 107)

¹⁴ See B. Champneys, ed. *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore*, (London, 1900) vol.I, ch. 6 to 11.

Courtesy, its manners and rites, is here as close to ceremony¹⁵ or liturgy as a code of behaviour can be, and the unmistakable medieval flavour does effortlessly connect, as it were, Patmore's own song of love to Chaucer and the verse romances of French medieval literature.¹⁶

As for the actual language, a brief survey of the titles of the Preludes is sufficiently eloquent. Among the most redolent of medieval courtesy these: The Rose of the World (i.e. Woman/Wife/Honor); Love Justified, Love Serviceable, The Praise of Love (*The Angel in the House* as a mid-Victorian 'Los des Dames'); the Joyful Wisdom (otherwise 'the wit of love' or 'gay Saber'); the Changed Allegiance (the married Mistress wilfully renouncing her Ladyship by promoting her former liege to Lordship in the home); Love Ceremonious, Honour and Desert, Love and Honour, Valour Misdirected, the Nursling of Civility, Constancy Rewarded. All this would be straight medieval or Spenserian allegory, were it not for the contrapuntal vindication of marriage over adultery 'Marriage Indissoluble,' 'the Married Lover,' prefacing the concluding Canto 'Husband and Wife.'

A safe key therefore to the interpretation of *The Angel in the House* lies in the analysis of the cluster of meanings contained in each term, phrase or figure bearing the recognizable mark of courtly language. This we shall now endeavour to demonstrate through a sampling of terms that illustrate both continuities and discrepancies in the understanding of courtesy by Patmore.

And pride of place naturally to the first mentioned of courtly terms: civility, the concluding word of the first Canto:

Unmannerly times ! But now we sat
 Stranger than strangers; till I caught
 And answer'd Mildred's smile; and that
 Spread to the rest, and freedom brought.
 The Dean talk'd little, looking on,
 Of three such daughters justly vain.
 What letters they had had from Bonn,
 Said Mildred, and what plums from Spain !
 By Honor I was kindly task'd
 To excuse my never coming down
 From Cambridge; Mary smiled and ask'd
 Were Kant and Goethe yet outgrown?
 And, pleased, we talk'd the old days o'er;
 And, parting, I for pleasure sigh'd.
 To be there as a friend, (since more)
 Seem'd then, seems still, excuse for pride;

¹⁵ *Ceremony*, a borrowing from Spenser's *Fairie Queen* and Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

¹⁶ See Valéry Larbaud: 'Le récit de Patmore est *chanté*. Rien n'est plus loin de Tennyson, et rien n'est plus près de Chaucer et de nos vieux romans en vers'; he adds in a footnote: 'Et surtout de Christine de Pisan'.

For something that abode endued
 With temple-like repose, an air
 Of life's kind purposes pursued
 With order'd freedom sweet and fair.
 A tent pitch'd in a world not right
 It seem'd, whose inmates, every one,
 On tranquil faces bore the light
 Of duties beautifully done,
 And humbly, though they had few peers,
 Kept their own laws, which seem'd to be
 The fair sum of six thousand years'
 Traditions of *civility*.

'Six thousand years' can be taken as encompassing whatever man accumulated since the origin by way of graceful life and practical wisdom, a perilous accretion over the centuries of ways and manners that provide the right nurture to man against '*unmannerly* times' precisely ! Civility in this light, here and elsewhere in Patmore's poetry, connotes the idea of a humanising, civilising and ultimately sanctifying energy at the root of courtly manners. No wonder then if in the daily tenor of human intercourse or in the stages of amorous pursuit and wooing, manners should combine desire and reverence, and such a phrase as 'the sanctity of manners' comes naturally to the lips of Felix at the very moment when the lovers confess reciprocated love:

From instinct of a mutual thought
 Whence *sanctity of manners* flow'd,

 I found, and felt with strange alarm,
 I stood committed to my bliss.
 (AH, 'The Abdication' (1), 135).

As with the Troubadours, *ars vivendi* and *ars amandi* closely intermix and affect the whole man, and courtesy becomes synonymous with grace, the word connoting both graceful manners and gracious ways, the latter adjective in association with 'great,' giving the phrase Paul Claudel was to remember from a reading of Patmore's ode 'Departure.'¹⁷ There Patmore referred to the departed wife's 'great and gracious ways' as a humanizing and sanctifying power in the home. As a matter of fact, civility, in like manner with the Troubadours' *Ars Amandi*, finds its exquisite yet 'majestic' embodiment in the Lady: instance this quatrain, not retained in the final version but highly significant as a cluster of cognate notions in Patmore's mind:

She [Honorial] charms with manners pure and high
 The fruit of an ancestral tree

¹⁷ *UE*, VIII. 'Departure' 362.

And a devout life govern'd by
 The rubric of civility.
 (AH, Book II, Idyl VIII, Canto X 4).

'Lignage' and 'parage' and a code of civil manners devoutly adhered to receiving their seductive form from the mistress of the house. The same cluster of courtly characteristics is found in the later volume of *The Angel in the House* in the mouth of Frederick in reference first to Honoria and then to the happy married pair at Hurst Hall:

Whate'er her faults, she's one of those
 To whom the world's last polish owes
 A *novel grace*, which all who aspire
 To *courtliest custom* must acquire.
 The world's the sphere she's made to charm
 (VL, I, 227-228)

And *fair*, indeed, should be the few
 God dowers with nothing else to do,
 And *liberal* of their light, and *free*
 To show themselves that all may see !
 For alms let poor men poorly give
 The meat whereby men's bodies live;
 But they of wealth are stewards wise
 Whose graces are their *charities*.

(VL II, IV)

'Courtliest custom' thus entails a social duty of enlightenment in the realm of manners and mores, and graceful ways are clearly shown in the narrative parts of *The Angel in the House* as conferring godly grace from the few to the many. Isolated, such a statement from one particular character in the narrative might be branded with heartless aestheticism and courtly manners be consequently impugned as mere court etiquette—one of the minor, if not futile, fine arts. Still the inmates of the Close or the Hall have a keen sense of social concern and welfare and the poet's purpose was clearly to show that aesthetics, ethics and religion did combine in his fair liberal figures, thus abiding by the chivalric code of behaviour.

The most perceptive understanding of the synthesis of characteristic courtly features, summarized in Patmore by *civility*, may well find expression in C.S. Lewis's *Allegory of Love*, a book which deals to a considerable extent with the rise and transformation of the *Ars Amandi* initiated in the poetry of the Troubadours:

We are to conceive of courtesy as the poetry of conduct, an 'unbought grace of life' which makes its possessor immediately lovable to all who meet him and which is the bloom (as Aristotle would say)—the supervenient perfection—on the virtues of charity and humility. (AL, 351).

I should like by way of conclusion to examine in *The Angel in the House* the contents of such terms as 'unbought grace of life' or 'charity' and 'humility.' And here as elsewhere I will contrast medieval courtesy and Patmore's own views of the 'poetry of conduct.' Once again the transference of courtesy from adulterous love to married love will be at issue. For Andreas Capellanus (here I am following closely C.S. Lewis's argument in *The Allegory of Love*), there cannot be any love or amor *stricto sensu* between married people and the proof given is as follows:

Conjugal affection cannot be 'love' because there is in it an element of duty or necessity: a wife, in loving her husband, is not exercising her free choice in the reward of merit... The love which is to be *the source of all that is beautiful in life and manners must be the reward freely given by the lady*, and only our superiors can reward. But *wife is not a superior*.¹⁸

Andreas Capellanus and Patmore are clearly agreed on the nature of the reward freely given by the Lady to the elected suitor: the gift of love as "the source of all that is beautiful in life and manners." Their difference lies in the nature and condition of the Lady: mistress or wife; man's free superior, the Mistress, or man's legal inferior, the wife. The historian or sociologist here will point out that in a feudal court and the feudal system of relations between the sexes, the wife was not a superior. Such a statement was of the nature of an evidence for Andreas the courtier. 'Mistress' in the exalted sense of courtesy and 'wife' in the strictly legal sense of marital subordination were mutually exclusive terms.

With Patmore in mid-nineteenth century England and in the privileged circumstances of a cathedral close, woman, man's spiritual superior, could of her own accord and free will renounce her queenly state in order to raise her inferior to her own level: stooping, not to conquer but exalt, was the not improbable aim of true married love. Three excerpts ranging from an early draught of *The Angel in the House* ('Honorina,' 1853) to a Prelude in 'the Betrothal' (1854) and a Prelude to the final Canto of 'the Espousals' (1856) testify, we think, to an unchanging vision of 'the destined maid':

I.

For as a Queen who may not find
 Her peer in all the common Earth,
 Submits her meek and royal mind,
 Espousing one of a subject birth;
 All barter of like gain above,
 She raised me to her noble place,
 And made my lordship of her love
 The humbling gift of her free grace.

¹⁸ *AL*, 36. Underlining ours.

(‘Honorio’ 1853)

The language is as ideally or suffocatingly courtly as one might wish, but feudal courtesy is clearly geared to the gracious act of submission that will exalt ‘one of a subject birth’ to the ‘lordship of her love.’ Desert or merit are here irrelevant and everything proceeds from ‘the humbling gift of her free grace.’ The language in this latter sentence is uncontrovertibly theological: the Lady by espousing one of ‘a subject birth’ appears as a Christ-like figure. Earthly bride and Heavenly spouse freely and graciously carry out the same ‘kenotic’ move of self-abasement for the sake of ‘subject’ Man.

II

He notes how queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;
How self-consign’d with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate.

(‘The Lover’)

Here the regal condition of the wife is again metaphorically asserted, the free and liberal act of self-abasement (‘stoop to mate’/‘self-consign’d with lavish will’) clearly proceeds from Superior to Inferior but aims at making *equals* of the partners in love (‘love proportionate’).

III. The Married Lover

Why, having won her, do I woo ?
Because her spirit’s vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen’s hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness,
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
Which can with safety so neglect
To dread, as lower ladies might,
That grace could meet with disrespect,
Thus she with happy favour feeds
Allegiance from a love so high
That hence no false conceit proceeds
Of difference bridged, or state put by;
Because, although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me ’tis by courtesy;
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattain’d desert;

Because her gay and lofty brows,
 When all is won which hope can ask,
 Reflect a light of hopeless snows
 That bright in virgin ether bask;
 Because, though free of the outer court
 I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
 Sacred to Heaven; because, in short,
 She's not and never can be mine.

The poem, as a whole, is a complex cluster of images and concepts relative to Patmore's psychology and theology of love. The language is, as expected, fraught with the familiar phrases of feudal allegiance and religious reverence while the conceit at the heart of the argument ('as on court-days...' etc.) is plain courtly imagery.

For the sake of our argument, I will insist on two closely knit aspects in the married lover's expression of his experience of love: courtly manners in the home, in actual earthly existence stem from a sense of unconquerable inner freedom, but the very movement of this same freedom in woman is to make love serviceable to man through self-devotion. Because she partakes of the freedom of the (Holy) Spirit, the wife can lower herself to serve and exalt. The Christ like figure once again. Like the 'mistress' in the realm of courtesy, whatever she gives is a free gift.

And so Andrea Capellanus and Coventry Patmore can after all be shown to agree on one fundamental point of love doctrine: love is not love if in its outward, practical manifestations, prompted by an exacting set of freely assented laws, it does not express the existential paradox of a free agent relinquishing all forms of superiority for the sake of a spiritually superior creation: man and wife, or mistress and servant making one flesh, one communional being in the image and semblance of God.

For Andreas, the medieval courtier and wit, as well as for Patmore, all considerations of orthodoxy or heterodoxy excluded, "love was... theology, and the key to the parable of life."¹⁹

¹⁹ Alice Meynell, introduction to *The Angel in the House* (London: Muses Library, 1905).

JACQUES CARRÉ

THE LADY AND THE POOR MAN;
OR, THE PHILANTHROPISTS'S ETIQUETTE

The rather bizarre association of the words 'philanthropy' and 'etiquette' in my title may be justified by the changing relationship between the poor and their benefactors during the Victorian age. From the beginning of the nineteenth century there emerged gradually a new and somewhat sophisticated code of manners regulating their encounters. The old-fashioned type of domineering and rather patronising benefactor expecting a servile and grateful behaviour from the recipients of charity seemed to be increasingly superseded by a more considerate, courteous, and immensely loquacious and sententious type of philanthropist. What is more, this new code of behaviour was recorded in a number of publications designed for the instruction of philanthropists; they range from the straightforward handbooks for the visitors of the poor such as Charles Bosanquet's *Handy-Book for Visitors of the Poor in London* (1874) with its detailed list of recommendations, to briefer scattered references in the prefaces or introductions to collections of edifying literature for the poor, such as Louisa Twining's *Readings for Visitors to Workhouses and Hospitals* (1865).

To some extent, these texts may be considered to be specialized manuals of etiquette. For example, their Victorian readers could discover how the visitors of the poor were expected to behave when they met them in their homes or charitable institutions. But the modern social historian can also find interest in them as he can discern why such a code of manners was found desirable by the charitably-minded, and what the moral and religious values underpinning their philanthropic behaviour were. The handbooks for the visitors of the poor, therefore, are much more than books of practical advice. They tell us something about the way the rich addressed the poor on the rare occasions when they met. And they can contribute to explain the why and the wherefore of philanthropy, and in particular the benefits which charitable persons expected to derive for themselves from their visits. What is original in them is that, unlike most books of etiquette, they are not (at least openly) aimed at allowing and helping the social ascension of ambitious individuals, but at regulating communication between people of vastly different social backgrounds. Does this means that the philanthropic

visitors had nothing to gain for themselves from these books and from these visits ? The question is indeed worth asking, and I will try to do so after studying first the context of the publication of the visitors' handbooks, then the nature of the advice given these books, and thirdly the process of communication between rich and poor that they describe.

*

The publication of charitable visitors' handbooks, as I suggested, started early in the nineteenth century. It is connected with the development of charitable visiting on a large scale, organised under the ægis of various societies throughout the country, often directly associated with religious denominations. The visiting movement began in the late 18th century in close connection with the rise of evangelicalism, which placed social work high in the hierarchy of the duties of the Christian. Sarah Trimmer was among the first writers to issue suggestions about visiting. In *The Economy of Charity* (1787), she laments the increasing gap between rich and poor, calling Britain 'a divided country'; she makes a plea for 'a mutual intercourse of goodwill' between the different classes. She also does not hesitate to give practical advice on such intercourse; for example, she gives the following recommendations to ladies visiting Sunday-schools:

It is certainly requisite for every visitor of a Sunday-school to dress in such a manner as may give weight to her lessons on this head; and evince that they really pay more attention to the inward adornings of the mind than to a fashionable appearance; for there will be great inconsistency in recommending moderation to the poor, while they themselves practice excess.¹

This excerpt is typical of the evangelical spirit which pervades much Victorian philanthropy, and which forms the religious and moral basis for many of the practical recommendations in visitors' handbooks.

The purposes of Victorian visitors were rather different from those of the benevolent ladies of the 18th century, which occasionally went round local cottages just expressing a benevolent concern to elderly people or lying-women, or bringing a small gift to a poor neighbour. The Victorian visitors saw themselves in an almost professional light, doing what, towards the end of the century, was increasingly called 'social work,' i.e. giving advice on such household matters as food, hygiene, child-rearing, encouraging savings and a wiser use of resources, and of course trying the rechristianize the urban

¹ S. Trimmer. *The Economy of Charity; or, an Address to Ladies Concerning Sunday-Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry under Female Inspection; and the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions*. (London, 1787) 40.

poor; they seldom gave out money, but put the poor in touch with suitable charities which would cater for their special needs.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, the handbooks for visitors were often written by clergymen or their wives or daughters. What was called 'district visiting' was one of the major forms of pastoral work by Anglicans, and parsons were eager to define the nature of this work with precision. One example of such literature is *The Female Visitor to the Poor* (1846), written by 'A Clergyman's Daughter.' She defines the 'three objects' or visiting in the following manner:

The first to relieve their temporal wants; the second, by sympathy to sooth their sorrows; and the third, to enlighten the darkness of their ignorance by bringing them into close and individual contact with the truth, as written for them in the Scriptures.²

Charitable persons did not simply visit the poor in their homes, but also in institutions such as prisons, hospitals and workhouses, where they would often conduct educational work. In her *Observations on the Visiting, Superintending, and Government, of Female Prisoners* (1827) Elizabeth Fry, the pioneer of the prison-visiting movement, defined the general climate in which such work should be performed:

In our conduct towards these unfortunate females, kindness, gentleness, and true humility, ought ever to be united with serenity and firmness. Nor will it be safe ever to descend, in our intercourse with them, to familiarity; for there is a dignity in the Christian character, which demands, and will obtain, respect, and which is powerful in its influence, even over dissolute minds.³

Louisa Twining is another famous Victorian philanthropist who, later in the century, organised and gave advice on visiting in institutions. In the preface to *Readings for Visitors to Workhouses and Hospitals* (1865), she gives some hints on the kind of person a visitor of the poor could be. She deplores that visitors are too often upper-middle class ladies, who are often absent from their home town, and therefore cannot go visiting on a regular basis:

I am led to think how greatly the work might be aided by another class of visitors, rather lower in the social scale, whose attendance might be so far more constant and uninterrupted—I mean the wives, and especially the daughters, of the lower middle-classes.⁴

² A Clergyman's Daughter [i.e. Miss Charlesworth]. *The Female Visitor to the Poor: or, Records of Female Parochial Visiting* (London, 1846) 196.

³ E. Fry. *Observations on the Visiting, Superintending, and Government, of Female Prisoners*. 2^o éd. (London, 1827) 22.

⁴ L. Twining. *Readings for Visitors to Workhouses and Hospitals* (London, 1865) xvi.

In the second half of the century, the visitors were no longer recruited exclusively among the upper strata of society. Some charitable societies like the London City Mission were even able to afford employing paid visitors, to whom precise instructions on their duties and behaviour were issued. The *Handy-Book for Visitors of the Poor in London* written by Charles Bosanquet, the first secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, is precisely designed for unexperienced visitors, and is for that reason the most detailed and circumstantial of all. Altogether, in spite of the varied settings of charitable visiting, there is great homogeneousness in the literature issued to visitors; they uniformly criticize the old-fashioned patronising philanthropy, and agree on recommending a new kind of behaviour with the poor. This is the topic to which I am going to turn now.

*

As in the best circles, the timing, duration and frequency of visits was a subject of concern for the philanthropist. One handbook recommended the visitors to avoid meal-times, Saturday afternoons, and, more generally, all the periods when husbands were likely to be at home. This was obviously designed to help ladies avoid the embarrassment of speaking to a possibly hostile or drunken man—the very situation which is described by Dickens in *Bleak House*, with Mrs. Pardiggle's visit to the brickmaker. Visitors were also advised to make relatively short visits, in order not to take up too much of the poor person's time, as he or she might have some work to do, or might find it embarrassing to have a long conversation with an educated person. Another reason for the shortness of visits, less often made explicit, was that some inexperienced visitors might find themselves at a loss what to say to the poor, although, of course, reading from the Scriptures seems to have filled in much of the time of the visits. A 'short' visit, however, seems to have meant about an hour, as the following excerpt from the anonymous *The Duty of Workhouse Visitation* (1857):

An hour fully devoted to reading, conversation, and prayer, is better than two hours of desultory work, and leaves a more distinct and permanent impression on the minds of the poor.⁵

Many handbooks insist that regular visits are highly desirable, preferably on the same day of the week and at the same time, especially when the person visited lives in an institution. L. Twining, as I suggested, criticized the upper-class ladies who discontinued their visits at week-ends or in summer because they were away in the country.

⁵ *The Duty of Workhouse Visitation, and How to do it*. 2^e éd. (London, 1857) 12.

As far as manners were concerned, the general advice given was to exhibit great courteousness and great humility. Visitors were urged not to enter a poor man's home before there was an answer to the knock, even as late as 1880,⁶ which suggests that some still did not think it was necessary. They were also asked not to sit down before they were invited to do so. They were advised not to be condescending or self-righteous. E. Fry writes of the ideal prison visitor: "She must not say in her heart *I am more holy than thou*; but must rather keep in perpetual remembrance, that *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."⁷ When the visitor's presence appeared not to be desired, they were required to desist immediately: Reverend Hessey writes in *Hints to District Visitors*:

Do not force your presence upon those who shew unwillingness to receive your visit; but express to them, in a friendly manner, your readiness to call again, if they should hereafter wish it.⁸

It is clear that such advice was indeed necessary, as some particularly militant visitors felt they had a right to intrude into poor people's homes in order to lecture them. Fiction provides us an illustration of this type of person, again with Dickens's Mrs Pardiggles in *Bleak House*, who explains :

If I find a person unwilling to hear what I have to say, I tell that person 'I am incapable of fatigue, my good friend, I am never tired, and I mean to go on until I have done.'⁹

And the hostile reception she meets at a brickmaker's cottage does not prevent her from reading a long excerpt from Scripture before departing majestically.

One can identify here one of the difficulties the visitor of the poor had to cope with: he might find himself faced with rude people, or at any rate people who knew nothing of his own codes of politeness. On the contrary, books of etiquette took it for granted that the people you met had at least elementary notions of polite conduct. What the visitors of the poor therefore had to learn—at least if we trust the handbooks—was how to retain their self-control and their courtesy in all circumstances, if only to provide an example to the persons visited.

This could of course prove a very daunting task, when he or she had to face some of the sordid realities of poverty such as filth, drunkenness,

⁶ Cf. F. K. Prochaska. *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 106-7.

⁷ E. Fry. *Op. cit.*, 21-22.

⁸ F. Hessey. *Hints to District Visitors, followed by a Few Prayers suggested for their Use* (London, 1858) 3.

⁹ C. Dickens. *Bleak House* [1853] (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971) 154.

violence and prostitution. Could one possibly remain benign and courteous when faced with disgusting behaviour or foul-mouthed hostility? One of the ambitions of the visitors was of course to suggest improvements in the habits and way of life of the poor. However they were required to be extremely discreet and cautious when they wished to suggest changes of conduct, as Reverend Hessey suggests in 1858:

Avoid anything like dictation in any suggestion, however valuable, that you have to make. Whenever you perceive a want of personal cleanliness, or a neglect of proper ventilation, take an opportunity of gently suggesting some improvement.¹⁰

But the most difficult task was reserved to those fearless philanthropists who tried to rescue what they called 'fallen women.' A favourite method of getting in touch with them was to invite them to so-called 'midnight meetings' where they would be offered some refreshments and plenty of moral advice. The first approach was made by handing out printed cards of invitation to the meetings in the streets. But the rescuers were often terrified at the idea of proposing cards to women who were *not* prostitutes... In his *Notes on Rescue Work* (1885), Reverend Brinckman suggests a way of accosting prostitutes which would not be offensive to an ordinary woman:

Best commence with an apology. 'I beg your pardon for speaking to you, but do you happen to know any young woman who is ill or in trouble whom I could be a friend to?' If this is said in a kind, civil tone, you may be asked, 'What do you mean?' and this will lead to further explanation and conversation. This is far better than walking straight up to one of these women and asking her 'If she does not wish to quit her present sinful life?' and being told, in reply, to mind your own business.¹¹

The key-word in this quotation is of course 'friend,' because it encapsulates the general ambition of all visitors of the poor, who insisted that what they had to offer was advice and sympathy rather than material relief.

This insistence on friendship, which is in evidence in all handbooks, implied that the handing out of money or help in kind by the visitors was only a minor aspect of their work. They were constantly reminded not to give anything to the families they visited before at least several visits had been made; in that way, it was hoped that the poor would consider them as true friends rather than alms-givers. Reverend Hessey writes in 1858:

Never state the object of a visit as being to see if any relief is wanted, for the visits of one who comes to be regarded only as a person from whom

¹⁰ F. Hessey. *Op. cit.*, 5.

¹¹ A. Brinckman. *Notes on Rescue Work, a Manual of Hints to those who wish to Reclaim the Fallen* (London, 1885) 84.

something is to be got, are rather worse than useless. ¹²

Doubtlessly, the consequences of this new attitude to charity must have posed problems both to the visitor and to the poor persons, who found themselves suddenly in a new kind of relationship, where the exchange of ideas, of information—in short, conversation—replaced, or delayed, the gift-relationship. Verbal communication in a fairly complex and prolonged way became an essential necessity in this new relationship.

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For this reason, the visitors' handbooks gave some advice on the difficulties of communicating with the poor. In the late eighteenth century, Mrs Trimmer had lamented that the rich and the poor now hardly spoke the same language. Curiously she attributed this linguistic gap to what she called 'the great cultivation of literature'—she was alluding, presumably, to novel-reading:

The higher and middling ranks are so refined, and the lower so vulgar, that their language is in many respects as unintelligible to each other as if they came from different regions of the world. ¹³

Visitors' handbooks therefore recommended the greatest simplicity in the choice of words; one even advised using words of one syllable if possible ! ¹⁴ The possibility that the visitor might not understand the people they met is not mentioned, but it doubtlessly existed. It would perhaps not have been a major problem, at any rate, since it was clearly the visitor who was expected to do most of the talking.

What then should be the topics of conversation between the visitor and the poor person ? Visitors were first urged to listen patiently to the complaints of the poor, to enquire about their children, to give material advice and, later in the century, to encourage self-help. Dickens, who had a lasting interest in charitable work, was evidently familiar with the behaviour of lady philanthropists, and shows how irritating their eternal questioning could be for a poor family. In *Bleak House*, the drunken bricklayer visited by Mrs Pardiggles comically provides both the questions and the answers:

Now you're a-going to poll-pry and question according to custom—I know what you're a-going to be up to. Well ! You haven't got no occasion to be up to it. I'll save you the trouble. Is my daughter a-washin ? Yes, she *is* a-washin. Look at the water. Smell it ! That's wot we drinks. How do you like it, and what do you think of gin, instead ! An't my place dirty ? Yes, it is

¹² F. Hessey. *Op. cit.*, 8.

¹³ S. Trimmer. *Op. cit.*, 183.

¹⁴ *The Duty of Workhouse Visitation, and how to do it*. 2^o éd. (London, 1857) 12.

dirty — it's nat'rally dirty, and ir's nat'rally onwholesome; and we've had five dirty and onwholesome children, as is all dead infants, and so much the better for them, and for us besides. Have I read the little book wot you left ? No, I an't read the little book wot you left [....]. How have I been conducting of myself ? Why, I've been drunk for three days; and I'd a been drunk four, if I'd a had the money. Don't I never mean for to go to church ? No, I don't never mean for to go to church. I shouldn't be expected there, if I did; the beadle's too gen-teel for me. And how did my wife get that black eye ? Why, I give it her; and if she says I didn't, she's a Lie !¹⁵

Of course, visitors, unlike Mrs Pardiggles, were expected to show real sympathy, not overbearing sententiousness. However the relationship between them and the poor were bound to remain very superficial; the ladies were warned that they should above all avoid any emotional involvement in the plight of any family, because it might lead them to give indiscriminating relief. Reverend Hessey warns the over-sentimental visitors: "Beware of allowing importunity or the excitement of a momentary sympathy to obtain from you an aid which your conscience disapproves."¹⁶ Visitors should also refuse to listen to criticism of neighbours or third parties. Gossiping was proscribed as being useless and degrading.

In order to eliminate such frivolous discourse, the visitor would quickly steer the conversation towards moral advice and religious instruction, which would take up most of the time of the visit. For that purpose, suitable models of conversation and extracts from Scripture or other religious literature were printed for the visitors. For example, *The Ladies' Companion for Visiting the Poor* (1813), provided examples of addresses to lying-in women, to a woman who has lost her husband, to persons in sickness, to the aged, to a person dejected from extreme poverty¹⁷. Other books provided selections from the Bible adapted to almost every situation connected with poverty. We can deduce from the abundance of such literature that the greater part of the visits to the poor were filled by the reading of such extracts. The visitor often acted as interpreter of Christian morality, or even as a representative of the parson or the minister. In fact, the district visitors were explicitly described as such: Reverend Cutts wrote in *The Pastor's Address to his District Visitors* (London, 1861):

You will have a mission; you will go with a measure of authority; if you are asked 'What business have you to come here ?', you can reply boldly 'The clergyman of the parish sent me.'¹⁸

¹⁵ C. Dickens. *Op. cit.*, 158.

¹⁶ F. Hessey. *Op. cit.*, 9.

¹⁷ *The Ladies' Companion for Visiting the Poor: Consisting of Familiar Addresses, Adapted to Particular Occasions* (London, 1813).

¹⁸ E. L. Cutts. *The Pastor's Address to his District Visitors* (London, 1861) 3.

Another aim of visiting, which was less often made explicit, was the encouragement of mutual understanding between the rich and the poor. The desirability of visiting in order to foster social harmony had been made clear by Mrs Trimmer as early as 1787; she lamented the politically dangerous effects of the haughtiness of many upper-class families:

Kept at this mortifying distance by those who partake the same common nature, the poor in their turn entertain unfavourable prejudices against those whom Providence has placed above them, and fancy that they disdain to consider them as fellow-creatures.¹⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century, this same desire to exercise some social control over the poor remained a potent if often unacknowledged driving force of philanthropy.

Altogether, the pastoral and pacifying roles of the visitors of the poor give a special meaning to the word 'friendship', so often presented in the handbooks as the essential aim of visiting. Friendship in that sense would hardly involve any exchange of feelings; communication between the visitor and the poor person would hardly be a reciprocal relationship but rather a one-way process. The avoidance of familiarity, so often insisted on, would maintain an insuperable barrier to any real friendship. The insistence of the handbooks on the courteousness of the visitors can therefore be seen in a rather different light than conventional politeness. They were not asked to be courteous in order to make their relationship with the poor easier or more acceptable—and in that sense the visitors' handbooks stand in sharp contrast with books of etiquette. They were asked to be courteous to provide an example of good manners to the uneducated persons they went to see. This is expressed very clearly in several manuals. Reverend Cutts writes in 1861:

Superior courtesy of manner, and more delicate consideration for the feelings of others, are among the advantages of your more gentle breeding, which I ask you to use [...] for the benefit of your poorer brethren and sisters.²⁰

One reads in another manual of the same period: "Watch your opportunity to shew kindness to any who may have manifested disrespect to you. Be courteous to the poor; it wins and instructs them."²¹

Finally, the display of courtesy and of sound moral principles in front of the poor had another side-effect, which, in my opinion, establishes a link, tenuous as it may seem, between visitors' handbooks and the English Renaissance courtesy-books. I mean that the handbooks insisted on the

¹⁹ S. Trimmer. *Op. cit.*, 13.

²⁰ E. L. Cutts. *Op. cit.*, 5.

²¹ *The Duty of Workhouse Visitation, and how to do it*. 2^e éd. (London, 1857) 1.

beneficial effects of visits on the visitors themselves, who, as they gave moral advice and religious principles to the unregenerate poor, were reminded that they had to apply them in their own lives. This theme is apparent from one end of the century to the other. One reads for example in a handbook of 1813:

Whilst we endeavour to inculcate upon them [i. e. the poor] the pure principles of Christianity, we shall become better acquainted with them ourselves; the duties we recommend we shall feel it incumbent upon us to practise.²²

The display of good manners towards the poor is therefore not based on the wish to exhibit conventional politeness; it springs from a belief that politeness is the recognition of the dignity of the poor as human beings, and is the outward sign of the respect due to all men, of whatever rank in society. This belief is of course typical of the Evangelicals and their criticism of the superficiality and worldliness of modern manners, exhibited for example in Wilberforce's *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes: Contrasted with Real Christianity* (1797). One may therefore venture to suggest that Victorian visitors' handbooks look back to the disappearing genre of the classical courtesy-book which, precisely, had described good manners as the outward sign of moral and intellectual qualities.

²² *The Ladies' Companion for Visiting the Poor: Consisting of Familiar Addresses, Adapted to Particular Occasions* (London, 1813) xiii.

KATHLEEN DEJARDIN

ETIQUETTE AND MARRIAGE
AT THE TURN OF THE XXth CENTURY:
ADVICE ON CHOOSING ONE'S PARTNER

Love, courtship and marriage have been compared to the three levels of a slice of wedding cake ¹: the sugar is love "because there is so little and it soon disappears," the almond is courtship, "because it is cloying and disturbing to the constitution," and the solid cake is "heavy, untending, comparatively dull matrimony." G.R.M. Devereux, the aristocrat who wrote several books on etiquette around the turn of the century, opines that "courtship has an old-world sound about it" and that "nowadays we have no leisure for courtly greetings; ...we are breaking down some of the old restraint and we are very free and easy now in England, though not quite so unconventional as on the other side of the Atlantic." Indeed, although the authors quoted here are London-based, language is thicker than water and Atlantic cross-currents are freely acknowledged. Flora Klickmann who says the luncheon was invented by "the practical, go-ahead American woman," is writing partly for 'colonial brides' and new vocabulary such as 'maid of honour' or new functions such as groomsman are "no doubt introduced by the many fair daughters of the West now resident on this side." ²

Etiquette books were being written for all those who were not quite sure of themselves: Flora Klickmann, like Devereux, mentions the middle classes, "who have been debarred from learning the usages of polite society in earlier years" and writes for "the average woman of today" as "the average man can only advance so far as his wife allows." ³ Society will frequent the vulgar millionaire and help him spend his money, but not his vulgar wife.

In fact these books for the new century were essentially practical ⁴ and aimed at enabling people to climb the social scale, or at least avoid rebuff, but all the authors insist that there is more to etiquette than that— and it is not for nothing that etiquette follows ethics in bibliographies. Devereux mentions that "in every rank there are accepted traditions, written and

¹ Emily Constance Cook ('Mrs E.T.'). *The Bride's Book*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901).

² Flora Klickmann. *Etiquette of Marriage* (London: Macqueen, 1902. Good Form Series).

³ Flora Klickmann. *Etiquette of today* (London: Cartwright, 1903).

⁴ *Etiquette of Engagement and Marriage*. (London: Pearson, 1903).

unwritten rules, to which men and women must submit if they will be self-respecting, law-abiding citizens.”⁵ The Routledge author insists that “all the pros and cons of the proposed marriage must be anxiously weighed and full consideration given to worldly as well as to emotional conditions.”⁶ He adds that in many European countries an engagement is a legally binding contract as well as a moral one and his legal mind makes him warn against effusive love letters which could be read in a court of law. The Reverend Bevan shows, if anything, even more moral seriousness, recommending women should adopt the four Ks as recommended by the Kaiser, translated as five English virtues: ‘Church, Children, Cooking, Clothes and Conjugal affection,’ this being “the old-fashioned scriptural ideal.”⁷ He warns against the “monkey tricks” of the suffragists and even compares falling in love with cholera and anthrax, so suspicious is his Puritan mind.

One generally has the feeling that etiquette books are aimed more at women, perhaps because the authors felt women were more likely to listen, but the women authors are less ambitious, more down-to-earth, and perhaps more cynical. They are certainly more aware than some of the men of the changes taking place and regard them in a more favourable light. Flora Klickmann says “the foundation of etiquette should be a desire to put people at their ease” and Emily Cook, although having strong opinions on yellow literature, treats social behaviour in a worldly-wise yet charitable way. She is above all aware that she is writing for the New Woman, the one who reads Ibsen, Shaw, d’Annunzio and Meredith and talks like a character from Oscar Wilde, one like Katherine Mansfield⁸ who, in a letter, said “Here then is a little summary of what I need—power, wealth and freedom. It is the hopelessly insipid doctrine that love is the only thing in the world, taught and hammered into women from generation to generation, which hampers us so cruelly.” A lot of women did not see eye to eye with the Kaiser, and the Kaiser’s war was soon to reinforce their opinions.

Most of these books were written during the Boer War, but references to it are slight (brothers coming home on leave, war not a suitable subject for conversation). Except for specific chapters devoted to conduct on holiday in Europe (where the British behaved badly), there is little reference to the world outside London, the disparities and tensions are between generations or perhaps between the (male) Establishment (not the young men on bicycles) and young women. As Devereux says, the old etiquette is cracking,

⁵ *Etiquette for Men*. (London: Pearson, 1902). Hereafter *EFM*.

⁶ *Etiquette, Courtship and Marriage* (London: Routledge, 1905. Routledge’s Household Manuals).

⁷ Rev. J. O. Bevan. *Wooing and Wedding Love, Courtship and Matrimony* (London, 1910).

⁸ Quoted in P. Vansittart. *Voices 1870-1914*. (Watts, NY 1985).

but it took two world wars and the contraceptive pill to finish it off. Advice here is given by wistful moralists and humorous pragmatists (Flora Klickmann will actually reply in the *Lady's Companion*, 1d. weekly). One book (Routledge) seems to have two authors. What is striking, however, is that through all the turmoil of the twentieth century, the ritual of the wedding ceremony itself has remained practically unchanged.

What kind of person should one marry ?

G.R.M. Devereux, the sophisticated aristocrat, is called the author but is more likely to be the editor of an anthology of lore called *The Lover's Dictionary* (1903),⁹ which resembles an almanach and is probably a re-hash of an older book. There are chapters on ancient arts like palmistry and card-reading, or the writing of love poems and others of more recent origin such as phrenology where 'amativeness' (the love of either sex for the other) and 'conjugalitv' (the desire for marriage) find their seat in a drawing of the head.¹⁰ Such credence was given to the significance of head shapes that four sets of drawings are printed showing suitable and unsuitable marriage partners (see plates XVI and XVII). The least attractive of the women would make an "invaluable helpmeet for a doctor or a parson... while the children will talk before they can walk." "Beauty is but skin deep" and men should look for women who are "refined, energetic, saving"; indeed, on other occasions, authors stress that men who marry for looks suffer at the dinner table. Emily Cook in her *Notebook*¹¹ murmurs that "it is sad that the very good are seldom pretty" but the most interesting assertion in this chapter is that the most admirable women should be left to benefit humanity and "men should not mar them by marriage" whereas it is stated a little later that women should marry "the shoulder-to-shoulder kind, the masterful, the kind-hearted and *the man with a mission* ..." (my italics) Another interesting point is that, along with "the miser, the jolly fellow and the clubman," women should avoid the despondent whereas men should avoid not only the 'undomesticated,' the 'conceited' and the 'aggravating,' (shades of Molière) but the 'low-spirited.' This tallies with Flora Klickmann's references to "these days of the nervous breakdown and insomnia."

The other chapters are less helpful, though one is warned against people with short, weak thumbs and handwriting with uncrossed Ts. Gentlemen should not set too much store by the language of gesture until they are sure

⁹ G.R.M. Devereux, ed. *The Lover's Dictionary* (London: Pearson, 1903).

¹⁰ Cf. *Time Magazine* (Sept. 9, 1991): "(Homo)sexual behaviour governed by hypothalamus."

¹¹ Emily Constance Cook. *A Woman's Notebook* (London, 1903). Chapter on character in dress.

the lady is also versed in it (this may imply a mixing of social classes). Under 'superstitions and customs' we learn that brides used to wear a specially made wedding-knife at their belt, but under 'hobbies, likes and dislikes' there is the remark that "the handicap of long dresses large hats, handbags and other feminine *impedimenta* render her progress abroad one of considerable labour and often of little grace." This ungentlemanly remark was perhaps provoked by the Paris International Exhibition of 1900— "*pour tous ceux qui sacrifient sur l'autel de la grâce, de l'éclat, de la splendeur et de la beauté.*"¹² The disapproval could be for reasons of cost, a dislike of frivolity, or an enlightened attitude towards young women with whom one could play tennis and go cycling. In which case the author could rejoice at the arrival of short skirts from America in the next decade.¹³

Although this encyclopedia is of little practical help it was republished four years later under the title *Marriage Guide*.¹⁴ Inside the cover of the *Lover's Dictionary* other books are advertised, dealing with dreams, fortune-telling, dances, the art of beauty, household hints and "dainty dishes on slender incomes." Four years later books advertised include home nursing, 'infectious diseases,' 'a healthy home,' three Devereux books on etiquette, but 'dainty dishes' has been replaced by 'indigestion and how to cure it'! One author is a woman doctor, another 'Isobel of Home Notes.' Medicine, magazines and etiquette seemingly march side by side. In fact the Reverend Hardy states that beauty is the outward and visible sign of health.¹⁵

In *Etiquette for Men* Devereux describes the kind of man admired by both sexes—in fact he later states that a popular man will also appeal to children and animals. He is apparently above all a calm man: well-bred, chivalrous, well-dressed, well-groomed, brave, strong, gentle, in control of temper and language, with a sense of honour and humour, neither sarcastic nor too perfect, neither servile nor bumptious. The first characteristics fall into three well-defined categories. The later ones are those which are likely to be produced by the former.

Routledge's household manual on etiquette, courtship and marriage tells young girls how to judge a man "while still retaining some clearness of mental vision."¹⁶ Here too there are categories: comes at irregular hours, attention wanders, unpunctual, doesn't attend divine service regularly, foppish, eccentric, slovenly, frivolous, shows disrespect for age, sneers at

¹² Kybalova et al. *Encyclopédie illustrée du costume et de la mode*. (Paris: Grund, 1970).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Marriage Guide* (London: Pearson, 1907).

¹⁵ Rev. E. J. Hardy. *Concerning Marriage*. (London: Ward Lock, 1901). He also writes ailing young man may have been 'ale-ing'!

¹⁶ *Etiquette, Courtship and Marriage* (London: Routledge, 1905. Routledge's Household Manuals).

things sacred, inclined to low and vulgar amusement, but (above all perhaps) overspending and lacking energy in worldly pursuits. The paragon who avoids all these pitfalls would be the fifty year-old suitor proposed by a father to his daughter who replied... "she would prefer two of twenty-five" (cited by the Rev. Hardy).

The women to be avoided, according to the Routledge manual, is actually all of a piece, that is to say that if we add up her faults, they are all in the same register: she is a flirt, of uneven temper, easily provoked, slow to be appeased, fond of showy dress, eager for admiration, frivolous, wavering in her duties, only showing lip-service in religious observances, petulant, pert, disrespectful to her parents, overbearing with servants, vain, gaudy, slovenly or morbid. It is only the last adjective which does not fit in. The rest is a description of the average teenage girl. In fact the Rev. Hardy says that "if some women are not worth looking at after thirty years of age, some are not worth speaking to before it."

Emily (Mrs E.T.) Cook starts from the assumption that both sexes have immutable faults. Her book is a dialogue with Miranda, a young wife who consents to type the script if Emily writes the book. Miranda has a husband, George, who now weighs 16 stone, wears check suits, has his hair cropped and goes to sleep after dinner. He has obviously not listened to Devereux who admonishes "if you are blessed with many inches or if your inches extend in the wrong direction avoid anything striking."¹⁷ Miranda plays 'truth' games sitting on the floor and used to belong to the Antimatrimonial League. This is marriage as it is, practice rather than theory. Emily tells Miranda most people marry a purely imaginary being, that engagements put girls into a state of 'semi-idiocy, star-gazing and idleness' and that usage replaces love very well as margarine replaces butter. She carries out an enquiry among her friends on why they married, eliciting replies like: "he was always so silent, so I thought it was because he was in love with me. I don't think so now," or "He was always coming to the house" or "He had a nice house" or even "I haven't the faintest idea." None of them quotes the virtues enumerated above except perhaps the most Ibsenised who had seen *Little Eyolf* and decided to devote their lives to the masses. They had a couple of batches of slum children to tea and caught scarlet fever, after which "Tom had briefs" and she had babies. This could perhaps be described as "shoulder to shoulder."

The most apt description showing the divide between theory and practice is in Mrs Cook's *Holiday Journal* of 1904 where a woman says:

George always seems to travel with an imaginary being who never gets her temper or even her hair ruffled; who is never cross or tired, or ill. Who is

¹⁷ EFM.

always ready to have guide books read aloud or poetry quoted to her. A kind of convenient shadow wife, made up like a composite photograph of all the very nicest ladies he has ever met at their nicer moments.¹⁸

Where to meet and how to proceed.

Having decided what kind of person to choose, the marriage candidate then had to engineer a meeting. The Rev. Hardy regrets that social divisions prevented many suitable marriages and quotes a remark that in Britain you cannot rescue someone from drowning unless you have been introduced. He also mentions the interesting case of young City men who live in suburbs and never meet suitable girls, though Devereux advises on wooing the business girl: one will not make her conspicuous by always travelling home with her. This implies one does sometimes do so; but journeys tended to relax etiquette and it was permissible to speak on a long one such as London to Penzance. Advice and information is contradictory. Hostesses are told not to introduce people who are present simultaneously during an At Home unless they are sure they wish to meet; nor should one introduce one's companion to a friend encountered in the street. A man was not even supposed to assist a lady he did not know in hailing a cab, and a lady and gentleman should not stop when meeting in the street but stroll. Probably it depended on whether you moved in the circle of the Rev. Bevan, Rector of Chillenden, in holy orders for more than 43 years and married for 40 of them, or that of Emily Cook, author of *London and Environs* (five editions by 1909) who went to see Ibsen plays and whose young female friends sometimes worked and even had cheque books and could best be described as a "minx with a fringe and a bicycle." The Reverend Bevan disapproved of all novels as they leave "lovers loving and parents signing cheques."¹⁹ In fact he projected writing a new ending to all novels to show married life was not so smooth.

At-Homes

Theoretically one met someone new of the opposite sex through introductions. Afternoon At Homes, though, were desperately short of men who were outnumbered 5 to 1.²⁰ The 'shy young man' appears in Devereux' and Flora Klickmann's books. Mrs Klickmann advises hostesses not to introduce him to everyone at once and Devereux tells him not to perch on

¹⁸ Emily Constance Cook. *Holiday Journal* (London, 1904).

¹⁹ Rev. J. O. BEVAN. *Wooing and Wedding (Love, Courtship and Matrimony)*. (London, 1910).

²⁰ EFM.

the edge of a chair "as if expecting dentists or a dun" and to avoid looking at his watch. He should rise and bow to ladies if introduced but only bow to those he had met when leaving. He was also supposed to hand round the cakes. Meanwhile it is to be hoped the hostess followed Flora Klickmann's advice, introducing solitary people and launching a "safe subject." Devereux advises young women to be good talkers and good listeners as they would then be invited more often. As men will not have had time to take "the proverbial cup of tea that is a woman's mainstay and stimulant," according to Mrs Klickmann, their "more massive appetites" have to be catered for and she suggests plates of sandwiches with "anchovy, potted meat, sardine paste, tongue, ham beef, collared head, Cambridge sausages in wafer thin slices with cress and finely chopped parsley." Food could, however, cause a problem for a lady out on a bicycle ride with a gentleman. She did not declare her hunger as it would imply he should pay and custom did not let her do so. Devereux snaps "it is high time that this sort of thing was done away with," especially too since paying all the time was "also a most serious tax on young men."²¹

Dinners

Young people could also meet at dinner but opportunities were limited. Devereux advises against discussing the weather and suggests "the latest play, book, game, or excitement, should afford topics to start on." "Do not begin a discussion on ritualism, the war, or politics." He adds "young ladies should not indulge in a variety of wines nor in much wine." Flora Klickmann thinks it advisable for women to avoid wine as it gives them a flushed, heated look. In any case, according to Devereux, "it is so usual nowadays to find non-drinkers at a dinner party that nothing is thought of it," and of course "ladies never help themselves to wine. Home-made lemonade and aerated waters find a place on almost all tables nowadays." This may be too idyllic, for the Reverend Hardy speaks of the forlorn hope that afternoon tea would replace tippling and states that young ladies order whiskeys and sodas in the morning in hotels.

One problem Flora Klickmann points out is that at dinner one's conversation is limited to one's immediate neighbour who "jerks out inane remarks about the war or the latest thing in bicycles" just as the brilliant man at the other end of the table reaches the critical part: of a story. And there is also the proverbial shy young man. One should ask him pleasantly where you might have met. By the end of the evening he is pleased with himself and the woman at least feels she has done her duty. Mrs Klickmann

²¹ G.R.M. Devereux. *Etiquette for Women* (London: Pearson, 1902).

gives detailed advice on how not to inconvenience servants, a “much desired gift” and suggests women should only eat soup, fish, chicken and sweets. One should never get absorbed in one’s neighbour’s talk: there is the drawing room—or the conservatory—for that. Food, of course, is “not discussed among refined people.”

Modern entertaining

Luncheon, that practical American invention, and high tea which replaced pretentious dinners (for “many a gentlewoman in England today who has to do the bulk of her own housework herself”) were obvious favourites with women, and Devereux mentions how luncheons have grown in popularity in the last few years. Another possibility was the private dinner at a restaurant described by Devereux as “comparatively new; certainly it is modern, though it is all part of what some old-fashioned persons call the decay of hospitality, meaning...the growing inclination to avoid worry and trouble.”²² It is interesting to see that laziness is not included among the feminine vices by the Routledge manual.

Balls and Dances

According to Devereux you need three things: “a knowledge of etiquette, skill in dancing, and a certain air of aplomb.”²³ If you cannot dance, you should not accept, and your duty is to back up the hostess. According to the various authors men did not shine at these assemblies: “They hug doorposts while eyeing ladies in the manner of a Bashi-Bazouk,” which is “gauche, unchivalrous and ungentelemanly” (as mentioned in *The Lover’s Dictionary*). Flora Klickmann shares this disapproval and talks of “young men who arrive late and retire to the smoking room, [who] give the impression they came for the champagne and cigars.” Devereux claims they behave in the same way at the theatre where they tend to rush out alone for a drink and smoke at the interval, knocking off wraps, disarranging hair and coming back after the play has started, sometimes reeking of smoke and whisky. The correct conduct was to prefer tea with the ladies and pay for it.

Girls had to be chaperoned at large balls and could not dance more than twice (three times at the utmost) with the same man. Even married couples were supposed to abstain. According to the Routledge manual, a young girl should show due reticence and modesty at a ball and confide in her mother, and young couples should never be left alone any length of time (beware the

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *EFM.*

conservatory !) Even in the 1929 and 1937 versions of *Etiquette for Men* you should not dance with people you have not been introduced to. The War probably put an end to that. But you had “at least to appear to enjoy yourself.”

Outdoor entertainment

The idea of appearing to enjoy oneself as part of the correct etiquette is repeated by Devereux when speaking of garden parties.²⁴ “The duty of all guests is to look and be as pleasant, chatty and bright as possible and endeavour to enjoy themselves.” A garden-party seems to have been a good opportunity for young couples: guests “may wander about the grounds, play tennis, croquet, cricket...sit, stand or walk with whomsoever they will.” “Ladies should wear their prettiest, most dressy day-gowns.”

Outdoor pursuits seem to have offered opportunities not afforded in confined spaces. Men helped a lady mount a horse by cupping their hands for her foot.²⁵ Ladies could ride with anyone they wished in the Park,²⁶ but not drive with them. As for bicycling, Devereux says there are few rules, but they should be observed²⁷: Keep Left, overtake on the right, avoid shooting past at high speed, pay for refreshments unless ladies insist, push ladies’ bikes up hill and “don’t ride ahead unless you are sure she is safely started.”

There is nevertheless ambiguity in the situation of the young woman. Flora Klickmann says that “actions are more likely to be misconstrued nowadays when young women have more freedom” and Devereux tells the lover of the bachelor girl not to go and “smoke in her flat till the small hours” for she can entertain him at her club. Miranda’s George had to be evicted during the small hours, according to Mrs Cook, so one can assume this was current practice among New Women. Flora Klickmann counsels young women not to promenade alone in the park or on a seaside parade, nor to have pavement conversation which may be overheard. Devereux says opportunities to meet through music, sport etc. have increased.²⁸ He even mentions there is a certain danger in public tennis and dramatic clubs for girls. Nevertheless “the intellectually minded may begin their courtship over musty books or choice editions, and advanced students will make love as ardently as a countrymaid and her rustic lover.” And “for healthy-minded lovemaking this comradeship yields golden opportunities....though their

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *EEM.*

hands meet over the mending of a tyre or the finding of a tennis ball." He adds that "acting affords priceless opportunities."

A warning is nevertheless given that this concerns the middle classes and a man's conduct is regarded differently according to his bank account. Still it does seem in contradiction with the Routledge account where it is difficult to get the lady alone. The author, who is not of the same mind as Devereux, says that once the proposal had been accepted "it is now his [=the lover's] right and duty to advise her and correct her faults. After marriage it may be too late!" This unfortunate girl must "avoid any unseemly display of her charms." Her father, meanwhile, should "spare no pains to promote his [=the lover's] interests in life." This, of course, is not the young, undesirable, suitor whose attention wanders, who is unpunctual, etc. Indeed it may be the fifty-year-old friend of the girl's father.

While the Routledge reader is promoting his own interest by instructing his betrothed, not saying too much in letters, not calling too often and being nice to the girl's mother, Devereux' reader is getting practical advice: he brings rare cuttings and cigars for her father, he lends her mother books and sings at her pet charity entertainment and even makes a martyr of himself at her flower shows and bazaars. He makes designs for her sister's woodcarving and teaches small Tommy to ride a bicycle. He can drop in for music and a chat in the evening, get theatre seats and supper or organise a river or cycling expedition or a cricket match. Indeed Devereux gives specific advice for courting home girls, bachelor girls and business girls and suggests if a man is courting a girl of more lowly station it is better to take her on the river or to Earl's Court than to Hurlingham until they are married.²⁹

Proposing

It is when the young man actually pops the question that the authors differ considerably. Mrs Cook comes out with various remarks, such as "men, being vain, don't usually propose without good hope" and "there is less excuse for rejection than ever; for the girls are now expected to go 7/8 of the way" (possibly a reference to the bachelor girls who had to throw men out in the small hours). However, "men are...very much like a flock of silly sheep; for they have a tiresome way of all running after the same girl." According to Devereux ³⁰ women should behave with suitable discretion and if not welcoming a proposal, should not go for moonlight strolls to look for the Southern Cross on board ship. Things mature quickly on board,

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

especially in the tropics, but young men should not ask for a quick decision (they were, incidentally, probably off to the Boer war, the Antipodes or India for a spell). Nevertheless proposals should be clear and replies definite—the Rev. Hardy refers to old bachelors put off forever by a first refusal. The proverbial shy young man should *write* his proposal, according to Devereux in one book,³¹ “for he will at least be intelligible”; but in another³² he advises against it because the girl might get the letter while pouring coffee and buttering toast for her small brothers and sisters. Most authors suggest the proposal should be made first to the girl and later to her father. Heiresses, of course, have to make the proposal themselves unless an equal is concerned. A man should not propose when he knows the parents are against the match. Mrs Cheadle remarks that it is said that “in the olden time in our country women made the advances, but it is not upon record whether they asked the consent of their future fathers in law.” This must have preceded the period referred to by the Rev. Hardy “when boys did not smoke paper and girls could blush”, for nowadays they address parents and elders generally “in a way that it would be improper to address a blackbeetle.”

Authors tend to discourage marriage of the very young for a twenty-year-old father would get tired of working for three³³ while the girl is incapable of bringing up the children. The Rev. Hardy compares them to “one stock of sweet peas supporting another.” However Devereux³⁴ warns against the marriage of a man of 45 and a woman of 38 who “would spoil their children immoderately and be out of touch with them when they grow up.” As for the young man who falls in love with an older woman, the latter should gently push him away—otherwise “she may paint her face and wear a golden wig, accentuating the ruthless lines round her tired eyes.”³⁵ Should a man marry a middle-aged woman, he should realise that “she has managed so far to get through life without him” and is likely to be rather independent. She, for her part, should shun white muslin and blue ribbons. Devereux drops his chivalrous guard with older women. He has already said, when speaking of the dangers of dramatic societies, that an older woman should be able to look after herself.

Prudent parents will have checked on a young man before giving him the run of the house, though Devereux mentions parents who regret not having excluded ineligible. The *Good Form* book says sternly that young men who meet sufficient suitable girls should not make a *mésalliance*. The

³¹ *EEM.*

³² *EFM.*

³³ *EEM.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Routledge manual stipulates that the young man check on his and her fitness to marry and present his prospects to her father before entering the house. This enables them to make "the mutual and public plighting of their troth" from which she can only be freed for causes of drunkenness, insanity, infidelity, serious gambling, indebtedness, insolvency, "not to mention other obvious reasons!" Interestingly these are all economic and legal faults and not those of the insouciance of youth. He adds that "fortunately ladies are not prone to the commoner masculine vices" (women, the author knows, don't drink whisky or have cheque books !). And, in spite of that, it is now that the man can seek to model her "for now she is like pliant wax in his hands." The heavy husband looms on the horizon when we learn "a man is never well settled in the saddle of his fortunes until he be married."

Devereux says that engagements are frequently broken off—and there seems to be consensus on this, although the Rev. Bevan, who disapproves of engagements that are lightly undertaken, thinks they should be broken off more easily. He says that a large number of couples have lost any physical attraction they might have possessed, that large men tend to fancy small women, that girls marry for reasons of pique or to escape, and that in any case there are too many women, some of whom can content themselves with a job and many of whom should emigrate, though young people do not want to as it is "too much toil, privation and separation." He notes pessimistically that the more cultured and thrifty class is postponing marriage while "the idle, vicious and improvident" have children.

In these etiquette books one finds a very wide range of attitudes and advice ranging from the almanach type (for example *Lover's Dictionary*), probably recycled from a distant past, to the modern woman journalist type as exemplified by Flora Klickmann, who was editress of *The Lady's Companion*, Emily Cook, who interestingly published under the name of Mrs E. T. Cook (her husband's initials—he wrote a very successful book called *Gardening for Beginners*), and Eliza Cheadle³⁶ who not only wrote extremely readable copy with quotations ranging from Montesquieu to Tittlebat Titmouse, but who also produced a son who found a Northwest passage by land and was the first to support the claims of medical women in the face of much opposition.

The case of Devereux is interesting, for this aristocrat writes very much more in the vein of the women than in that of the Victorian moralist. Mrs Cook mentions that etiquette books were selling well and this may well refer to the more sober ones. It was, after all, a period when people desired to learn and better themselves in general. Mrs Cook's book, as can be

³⁶ Eliza Cheadle. *Manners of Modern Society* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1872).

verified by reading some of her other writings, was aimed at the 'Ibsenised' young girl, a product of the new girls' high schools³⁷ who, when taken on a continental tour, is bored by the Alps, enjoys the Eiffel Tower but not Milan Cathedral (except for the spiral staircase), cares for nothing in Venice but the sham jewelry, likes the lifts in hotels and complains that walking knocks her up. Her aunt Emily sighs that "we once taught children to live up to us; now we do our best to live down to them."

Which books young people read no doubt depended to a great extent on where they lived: Hampstead or Aberdeen, but most of the young men referred to seem equally uncouth. According to the Rev. Hardy they appeared before girls dressed anyhow "in any and scarcely any clothes, smoked in their faces, gate-crashed, said words and referred to things that should be nameless and did not make room for women who were not pretty on the bus. It would appear that both sexes were perhaps in need of a little polish." What they got was the First World War so perhaps it was well that they were not too effete.

³⁷ Emily Constance Cook. *A Woman's Notebook*. (London, 1903).

PART FIVE
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALAIN MONTANDON AND JACQUES CARRÉ

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CONDUCT-BOOKS
PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN (1500-1993)

Note: This select bibliography of conduct-literature published in Britain merely intends to list the more successful or important books, and their major reprintings. It does not provide full bibliographical details, which will be given in a more extensive bibliography we are now preparing. We have included translations into English of the more famous continental conduct-books, some of which were as influential as their British counterparts.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

1521

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Pl. I. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness* (1747) I, 'The Fellow 'Prentices at their Looms', second state.



Pl. II. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, II, 'The Industrious 'Prentice Performing the Duty of a Christian', second state.



Pl. III. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, III, 'The Idle 'Prentice at Play in the Churchyard, During Divine Service', second state.



Pl. IV. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, IV, 'The Industrious Prentice a Favourite, and Entrusted by his Master', second state.



Pl. V. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, V, 'The Idle 'Prentice turn'd Away, and Sent to Sea', second state.



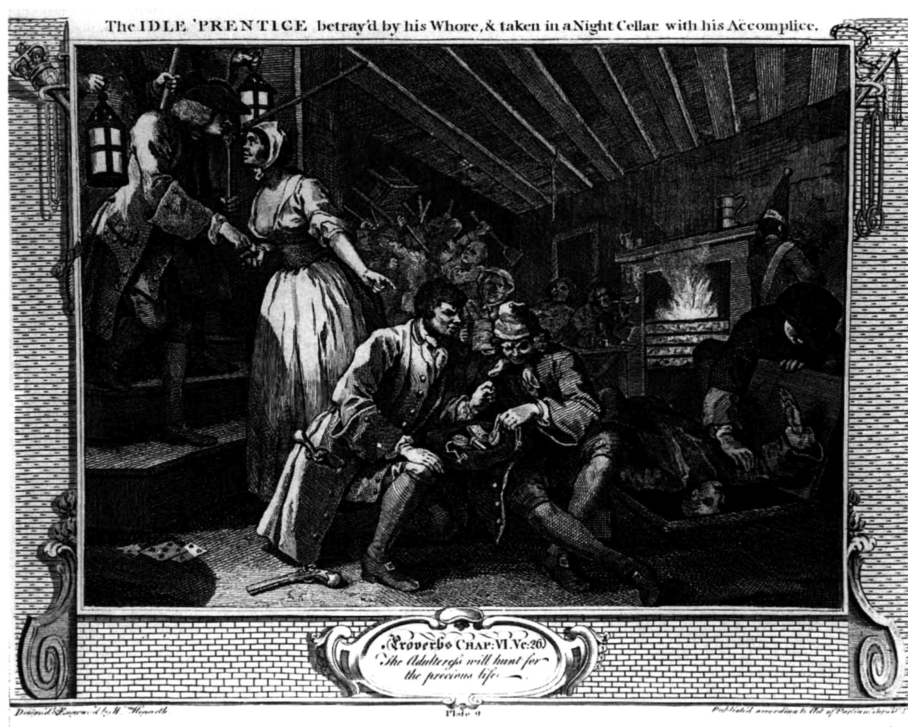
Pl. VI. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, VI, 'The Industrious Prentice out of his Time, and Married to his Master's Daughter', fourth state.



Pl. VII. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, VII, 'The Idle 'Prentice return'd from Sea, and in a Garret with a Common Prostitute', second state.



Pl. VIII. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, VIII, 'The Industrious 'Prentice Grown Rich, and Sheriff of London', second state.

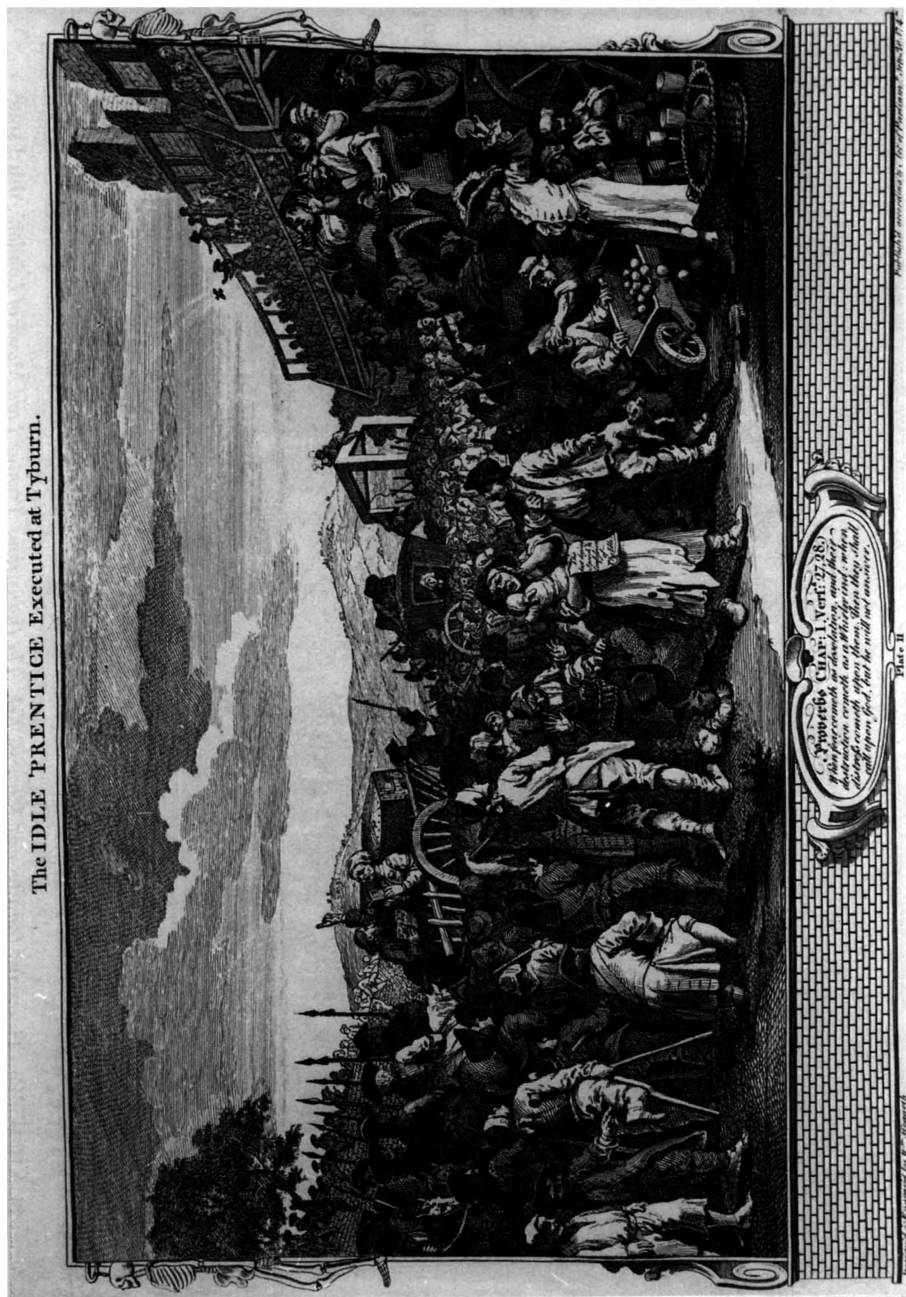


Pl. IX. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, IX, 'The Idle Prentice betray'd by his Whore, and Taken in a Night Cellar with his Accomplice', third state.



Pl. X. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, X, 'The Industrious 'Prentice Alderman of London, the Idle One Brought before him and Impeach'd by his Accomplice', second state.

The IDLE 'PRENTICE Executed at Tyburn.



Pl. XI. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, XI, 'The Idle 'Prentice executed at Tyburn', third state.

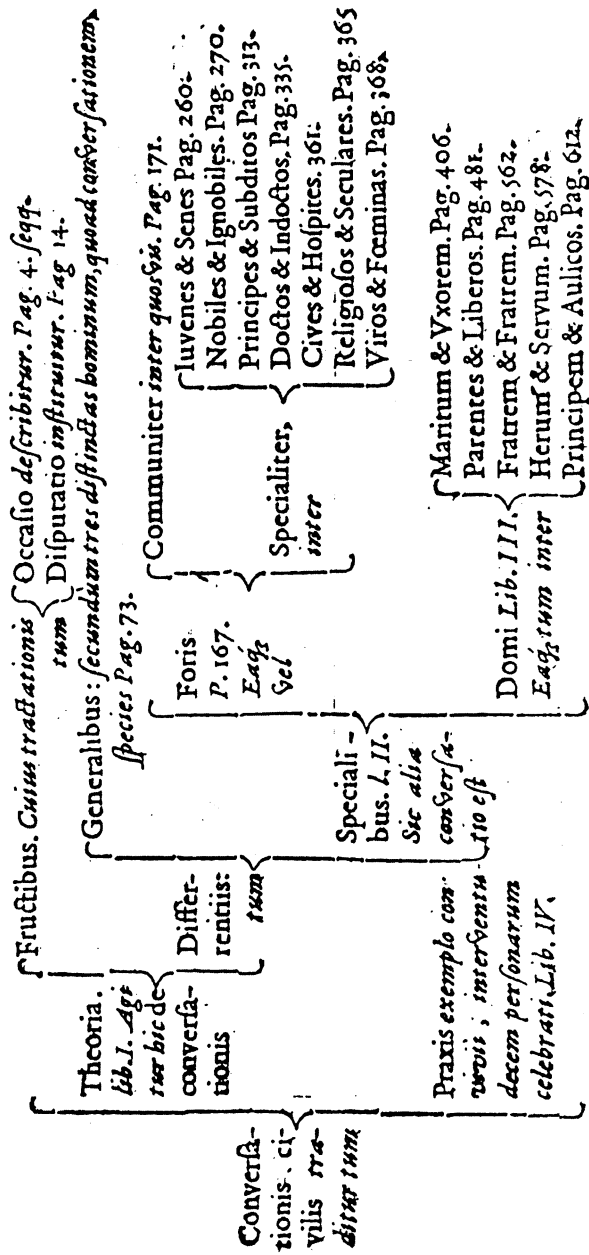
The INDUSTRIOUS 'PRENTICE Lord-Mayor of London.



Pl. XII. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, XII, 'The Industrious 'Prentice Lord Mayor of London', third state.

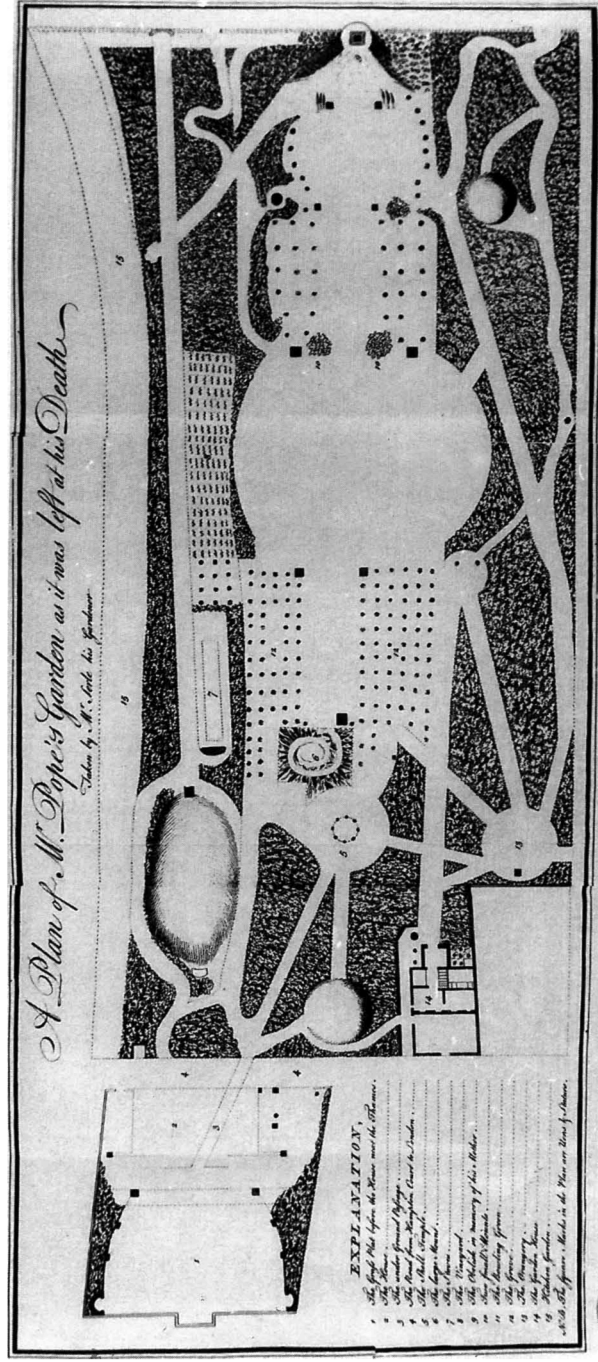
[Plate XIII: Illustration of Haastrup's chapter]

Schematismus generalis totius operis.

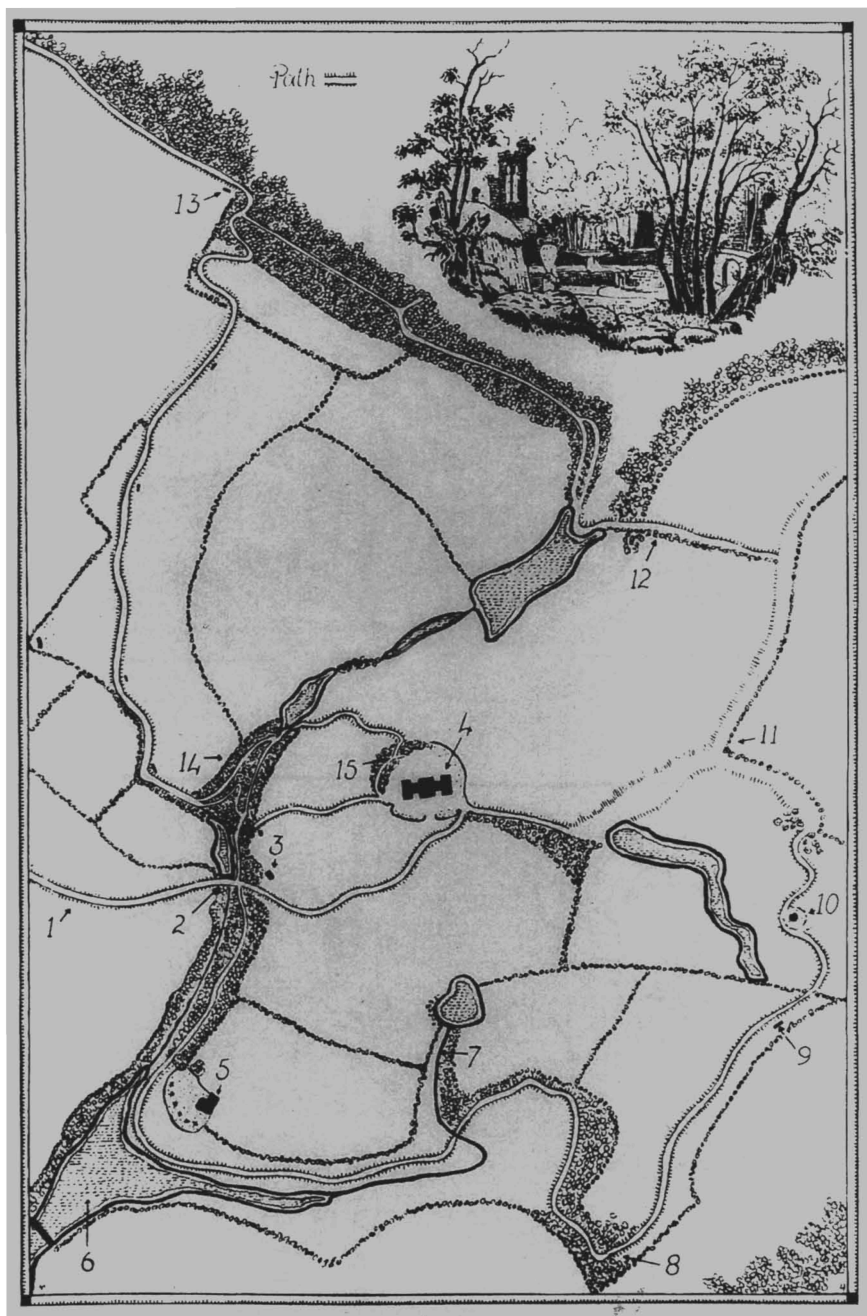


Pl. XIII. Stefano Guazzo, *De Civili Conversatione Libri Quattuor* (Strasbourg, 1614), Fol. I, verso: 'Schematismus generalis totius operis'.

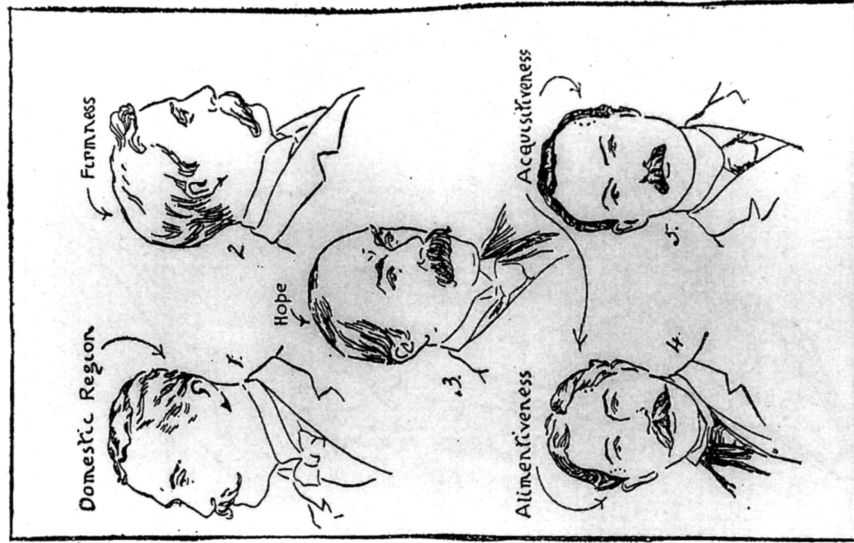
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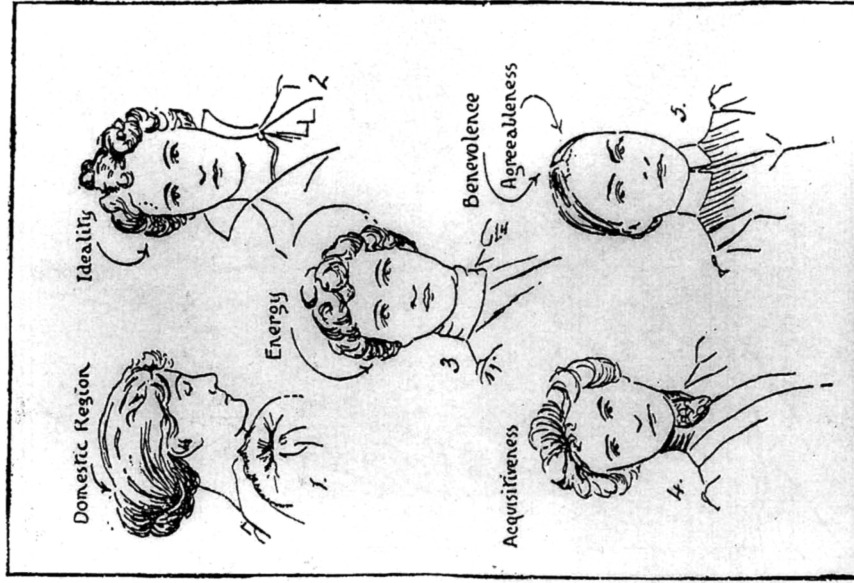
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Pl. XVI. Male heads, in G.R.M. Devereux, *Marriage Guide* (London, 1907), 21.



Pl. XVII. Female heads, in G.R.M. Devereux, *Marriage Guide* (London, 1907), 21.